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The New Deal Arts Projects: A Critical Revision
Constructing The 'National-Popular' In New Deal
America 1935-1943

Jonathan P. Harris

A Thesis Submitted To The Council For National
Academic Awards In Partial Fulfilment Of The
Requirements For The Degree Of Doctor Of
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Jonathan R. Harris

ABSTRACT

The thesis is an analysis of the creation, operation and eventual ending of the Federal Art Project, inaugurated by The United States Government in 1935. It situates the Project in the context of the Great Depression and the provision of social security for the American people. Through an extensive reading of policy statements, press releases and administrative directives produced by the staff and artists of the Federal Art Project, the thesis accounts for the functions served by the Community Art Centre programme, the mural projects and the Index Of American Design. It argues that these operations of the Federal Art Project were intended to construct a coherent national identity in the United States and assert the role of the Government in ordering the lives of the people. The thesis presents an interpretation of the political context within which the Federal Art Project became discredited in the late 1930s and was abolished during the Second World War. Though the experiment of the Federal Art Project was not repeated, the thesis argues finally that the role of the State in the culture of twentieth century American society has developed in a number of ways since the 1930s. In contrast to existing work on the Federal Art Project, this thesis concentrates on the particular nature of the State in America, rather than on the employment of artists or the relation of the art to general histories of twentieth century American culture.

In Memoriam:

Nicos Poulantzas

... Acknowledgements:--

My deepest thanks are to Helena and Stewart Ranson for getting me to university in the first place. Without the kindness, diligence and acuity of Jon Bird and David Mellor this thesis would never have been finished. Anne-Marie, thank you for your support and putting up with my obsessions for two years!

CONTENTS

<u>Introduction</u>	1
The State And The Federal Art Project	2
The New Deal Art Projects And The Historiography Of Twentieth Century American Art	3
The State And Hegemony	5
The Components Of Hegemonic Discourse	8
The Federal Art Project And 'The Social'	12
 <u>Chapter 1:</u>	
The Depression And The New Deal: Artistic Production In The Early 1930s	21
The Economic Conditions Of Artistic Production Before The New Deal	22
The Crisis In American Capitalism And The New Deal	27
The Early New Deal Art Projects	36
 <u>Chapter 2:</u>	
The Administrative Organisation Of The Federal Art Project: Power, Possession And State- Cultural Populism	50
The Administration Of The Federal Art Project: Power Network, Work-Discipline And Cultural Property	51
Federal Artists, Federal Art And Rooseveltian Populism	62
'New Horizons' And The New Deal	68
 <u>Chapter 3:</u>	
Nationalising Art: The Community Art Centre Programme Of The Federal Art Project	82
The Community Art Centre Programme And New Deal Democracy	83
New Deal Cultural Democracy And The Racial Interpellation	88
Cultural Democracy And The Construction Of Temporalities	95

Modernity, Modernism And Cultural Disintegration	99
Reconstituting 'America' In Community Art Centre Discourse	107
 <u>Chapter 4:</u>	
'Technologies Of The Soul': Federal Art In Institutions	122
Federal Art Project Discourse: Some Interpellative Arenas	123
State Housing Policy And Federal Art Project Discourse	124
State Pedagogy And Federal Art Project Discourse	135
State Penal Discipline And Federal Art Project Discourse	139
Body/Culture/National Reparations	143
Distraction/Abstraction: Modernism And Psychoanalytic Discourse	147
 <u>Chapter 5:</u>	
Indexing American Design: The Statization Of Subjects/History/Territory	168
Subject/Terrain/History	169
Designing American Tradition	171
The American Cultural-Popular	177
The State's Mimetic Jurisprudence	182
Frontiers Of Subjectivity	185
The Differential Gendering Of The Frontier Subject	190
Power/Knowledge In The Index Of American Design	193
 <u>Chapter 6:</u>	
State Cultural Strategies: Some Operational Modulations	217
The New York World Fair And The Federal Art Project	218
Visualising Social Order	221

Federal Art At The Fair	223
State Cultural Surveillance	228
State Social Management: The Planning Council	234
The State And 'Inter-American' Cultural Relations	239
 <u>Chapter 7:</u>	
The End Of The Federal Art Project: Art, Politics And The State	258
The Federal Art Project: Change And Opposition	259
Legislating For State Culture: The Fine Art Bills	264
Support And Opposition For The Bills: State Legitimation	266
The Federal Art Project Under Attack	272
Support For The Federal Art Project: 'Defending A Cultural Democracy'	274
The Federal Art Project And New Deal Democracy	277
Anti-Communism And The Federal Art Project	282
'American Liberalism' And The Emergence Of Aesthetics	286
Federal Art Project 'Popular Frontism'	289
The Eclipse Of 'Social Painting'	293
 <u>Conclusion</u>	311
'...Weapons As Necessary As Arms'	312
National Art Week And Corporate Sponsorship	314
'Democratic Eclecticism' And The 'Return To Aesthetics'	318
The State And Cultural Production	322
 <u>Bibliography</u>	327
Archive Papers	328
Books	329

Articles	337
Unattributed Articles	342
<u>Illustrations</u>	345

INTRODUCTION

THE STATE AND THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT

This thesis presents an analysis of the formation, operation and eventual termination of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, which was inaugurated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 'New Deal' Administration in the United States Of America in the summer of 1935¹. The vast bulk of the thesis consists of a critical reading of what shall be called Federal Art Project 'State Discourse'. This term denotes a body of policy formulations, operation manuals, administrative directives and press releases produced by functionaries of the Federal Art Project and associated New Deal agencies². Rather than an integrated narration of the history of the Federal Art Project in the period 1935 to 1943, the thesis treats the formation, operation and termination of the Federal Art Project as relatively discrete objects of study. After a discussion of the pre-history of the Federal Art Project, entailing a consideration of the nature and conditions of artistic production in America in the early years of the Depression, the bureaucratic and operational structure of the Federal Art Project is examined. This is followed by three case studies concerned with the Community Art Centre programme of the Federal Art Project, the Mural Programme which allocated Federal art and artists to state institutions, and the Index Of American Design. The thesis then moves to discuss the Federal Art Project's involvement with the New York World Fair of 1939-1940 and the Project's imbrication with wider Federal State planning of America's economic, social and international relations. This touches

on the relationships between the State's involvement with cultural production in the 1930s and developments in the Post-Second World War era ³ . The thesis concludes with an account of the changing political conjuncture in the United States in the late 1930s and early 1940s and the reasons for the discrediting of the Federal Art Project which led to its demise. Common to all sections of the thesis are the various ways in which the Federal State, through the Federal Art Project, attempted to radically transform the popular meaning of the terms 'art' and 'artist' in New Deal America in the mid and late 1930s ⁴ .

THE NEW DEAL ART PROJECTS AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN ART

Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the nature and purpose of the Federal State's intervention into cultural production in America during the Depression, it is also important to indicate and account for the place of studies of the New Deal art projects within the dominant history of art in America in the twentieth century. Indeed, this is true of 'New Deal Culture' as a whole. This problem inevitably involves, on the one hand, consideration of the explicit politicization of cultural production during the 1930s in America and, on the other, the growth and significance of aesthetic modernist ideas and practices.

Within the dominant history of twentieth century American art, the treatment of the 1930s and the New Deal art projects in particular, is slight and inadequate. There is a general lacuna in histories of the development

4

of American art regarding the historical significance or critical value attached to the Roosevelt Government art projects, instituted from late 1933 until their atrophy during the Second World War. The Public Works Of Art Project (1933-1934), the Section Of Painting And Sculpture (1934-1943), the Treasury Relief Art Project (1935-1943) and the Federal Art Project (1935-1943) are usually mentioned briefly and simultaneously disparaged. The most generous treatment of the projects in general histories of American art consists of praising them, and especially the New York City Federal Art Project, for creating an artistic and social milieu regarded as essential for the eventual triumph of the Abstract Expressionists after the Second World War ⁵. This situation provokes two questions: firstly, to what shall be attributed the silence or scorn of art historians for the Government art of the 1930s? Secondly, what pattern or trajectory does the history of American art follow which necessitates this elision of a decade of art and artists? This thesis contends that the dominant history of art in twentieth century America is concerned to celebrate the development and success of modernist art and artists. The ways in which the New Deal art projects are both negotiated presences and absences in histories of American art reveal the modernist structure and premises which power and sustain the dominant position from which histories of twentieth century American art are constructed and whose teleology culminates in Post-War Abstract Expressionism ⁶. The 'forgetting' of the Federal Art Project, as well as of other State interventions into

cultural production ⁷ , constitutes a logical repression of a political, social and ideological conjuncture which made possible a very different future for American society and art than that which occurred ⁸ . The role of the expanded Federal State in New Deal America consisted of attempting to ameliorate the chronic structural crisis of monopoly capitalism. Within this crisis, the conditions and relations of cultural production were identified by the State as both embodying and powerfully symbolising the divisions and fragmentations of American society and national identity. The Federal Art Project, it will be argued, constituted an attempt by the State to undermine the influence of modernist cultural production and reform the artist as a proper Citizen of the Nation and dutiful servant of the State, represented as the embodiment of the Will Of The People. Because of this, within Modernist American Art History, the New Deal art projects are predominantly 'unspeakable', given a minor 'facilitating' role or seen as definite obstacles in the path of the creation of an internationally dominant but indigenous modernist art. The elision and derogation of the projects in histories of twentieth century American art are part of the formal logic of the structure of that history, protecting the seamlessness and apparent inevitability of the modernist trajectory ⁹ .

THE STATE AND HEGEMONY

In response to the deprecation of the modernist historical tradition, F.V. O'Connor ¹⁰ , R.D. McKinzie ¹¹ , G. Berman ¹² , K.A. Marling ¹³ , M. Park ¹⁴ and G. E. Markowitz ¹⁴

and J. deH. Mathews ¹⁵ have been largely responsible for attempting to recover the art projects and to argue for the importance of the art they produced. Although O'Connor and McKinzie concur with Sandler, Rose and Geldzahler on the importance of the projects in creating a milieu out of which Gorky, Pollock and Rothko et al, emerged, they also give the projects endogenous value, rather than merely seeing them as part of the aetiology of Abstract Expressionism ¹⁶ .

These attempts to reinstate the art projects in the history of twentieth century American art have succeeded in bringing the politics and culture of Depression America into visibility, but have failed both historically and theoretically to confront either the nature of the art historical construction of American art in the twentieth century or the significance of the State's intervention into cultural production ¹⁷ .

This thesis explicates the nature and role of the State's involvement with cultural production from the perspective of a theory of hegemony ¹⁸ . The theoretical apparatus which this analysis of the Federal Art Project uses has been drawn from the concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci and elaborated more recently in the work of Nicos Poulantzas and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe ¹⁹ . 'Hegemony' is the social process through which a political and ideological consensus is constructed by an 'historic' bloc' organised around a particular class ²⁰ . For Nicos Poulantzas, the State understood as an ensemble of institutions, is a central 'factor of cohesion' involved in the production of an hegemony within a social formation ²¹ .

This thesis, rather than being an account of the work of particular artists employed on the Federal Art Project ²², or an attempt to categorize Project aesthetic styles or principles ²³, understands the activities and languages of the State in its involvement with cultural production, as strategic components of a hegemonizing discourse. Federal Art Project discourse is 'read' in terms of its function in the production of monopoly capitalist hegemony in the United States.

Central to Gramsci's notion of hegemony is the concept of the 'National-Popular', which includes discourses of patriotism and nationalism, which Gramsci called 'popular religion' ²⁴. According to Chantal Mouffe:

'A successful hegemony is one which manages to create a collective "national-popular will" and for this to happen the dominant class must have been capable of articulating to its hegemonic principle all the national-popular ideological elements' 25

This thesis argues that the Federal Art Project, through its activities and discourses, produced a particular conception of the 'National-Popular' based on support for Roosevelt's reformist policies. The guiding proposition or 'hegemonic principle' of this 'National-Popular' discourse was that the Federal State, represented as a rationalising and neutral instrument mobilised by the Roosevelt New Deal Government, was capable of resolving the antagonisms of capitalist society in crisis: the New Deal would not bring about the end of capitalist economic and social relations in America, but would manage and improve the lot of the mass of the people. Roosevelt's own political discourse and those produced by the Federal Art Project were

specifically populist: they appealed to 'the People' while producing a discourse which functioned to preserve and entrench the power of monopoly capital in the USA ²⁶ .

THE COMPONENTS OF HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE

Using a theory of 'hegemonic discourse' elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, this thesis argues that Federal Art Project policies and programmes were intended to reconstruct the identities of subjects - for instance, the 'artist-subject' or the 'audience-subject' - in America in the mid and late 1930s ²⁷ . According to Laclau and Mouffe, a 'subject-position' is a place constructed in discourse and in social practice, from which it is possible to speak and act. They use the term 'subject-position' instead of 'subjectivity' to stress the plurality of social identities possible and to indicate that there are no essential or necessary locations from which to speak and act ²⁸ . The construction of a subject-position and the establishment of a specific identity is the result of the process of 'interpellation': the 'calling' or 'hailing' of subjects which Louis Althusser described:

'There are individuals walking along. Somewhere (usually behind them) the hail rings out: "Hey, you there!" One individual (nine times out of ten it is the right one) turns around, believing/suspecting/knowing that it is for him, i.e. recognising that "it really is he" who is meant by the hailing' 29

This thesis argues that the discourses produced by the Federal Art Project interpellated individual subjects as principally 'Citizen-subjects', within the New Deal's

'National-Popular' discourse. The interpellated Citizen-subject-position occupies the key location in Federal Art Project discourse on art and society. Acting as an 'articulatory principle' or as a 'nodal point' of discourse, the Citizen-subject-position establishes the Nation-State and Law as the originating principle of social relations which defines the proper existence and action of individual subjects within the Nation ³⁰ . The discourses produced by the Federal Art Project, in all their variegation and dispersal, tendentially reproduce this same hegemonizing articulation: the linking or 'over-determination' of the subject-position 'reformed artist' by the Citizen-subject-position ³¹ . This practice of structuring or 'articulating' discourse which constituted the nodal point of Citizenship as the over-determining position constructed 'equivalences' between a number of other, different subject-positions. While the 'reformed artist' is precisely not the same as, but becomes equivalent to, the Citizen-subject, a set of other subject-positions are linked within an 'equivalential chain'. These included, in Federal Art Project discourse, for example, the subject-positions 'worker', 'black', 'woman', etc ³² . These subject-positions, over-determined by the Citizen-subject, can be said to 'displace' or 'imply' each other: not always and never necessarily, but in Federal Art Project discourse a Citizen can be a 'black woman artist' and be considered a 'worker'. The subject-position Citizen (or People, understood again as a juridical entity) can be said to stabilize or 'fix' the connotation of the other subject-positions in the 'equivalential discourse', be it that, for example, of

'worker', 'woman', 'black', etc. To be a 'reformed artist' in Federal Art Project discourse is to already occupy responsibly the Citizen-subject-position. To be a Citizen-of-the-Nation-State implies the possibility of occupying a plurality of equivalent subject positions ³³ .

This articulation of discourse, for Laclau and Mouffe, consists of the transformation of discursive 'elements' into structured 'moments'. The articulatory process works to modify the identity of the elements articulated ³⁴ . As has been explained, the discursive articulations of the Federal Art Project transformed the meaning of the subject-position 'artist' in relation to the nodal point of the Citizen-subject-position. Although other subject-positions could be included in this equivalential discourse, there were limits to the expansion of this hegemonic formation. This limit, according to Laclau and Mouffe, provides the definition of a 'discursive antagonism'. If the chains of equivalence within Federal Art Project discourse articulated simply different 'moments' or subject-positions, a radical difference must be understood as an antagonism. A discursive antagonism is, for Laclau and Mouffe, 'the failure of difference' ³⁵ . Such an antagonism constructs elements as moments irreconcilably different and opposed: equivalence becomes impossible ³⁶ . For example, within Federal Art Project discourse, the 'reformed artist' subject-position is the 'artist' articulated as Citizen with recognised responsibilities to the Nation-State. Expelled as a possible equivalential subject-position is the 'modernist-artist', articulated as irrecoverably alien and tied to a European discourse of the Other ³⁷ .

While Federal Art Project discourse constructed those relations of equivalence between subject-positions which constituted the New Deal 'National-Popular' and those terms which became the limit of that hegemonic discourse, what could be called a State 'meta-discourse' articulated the Federal Art Project itself as a 'moment' of the New Deal. Within this meta-discourse, all the agencies sui generis - the National Recovery Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Works Progress Administration, etc - were discursively articulated as simple differences which together constituted 'the New Deal' ³⁸ .

Through such agencies as the Federal Art Project, the U.S. Federal State was instrumental in drawing individual subjects into its construction of what it was to be American. The effect of this interpellation by the State was to be that individual subjects would recognise themselves as loyal Citizens of the Nation ³⁹ . This discourse of the Nation and on the constituent elements of National Unity was an expansive one: it could use and draw on many diverse traditions, practices and values. The only condition for the construction of this equivalential discourse constituting the 'National-Popular' was that the elements were articulated as non-antagonistic. There were limits to the expansion of this hegemonizing discourse: it could not articulate, for example, some Marxist political elements or some White Suprematist elements ⁴⁰ . It could, and, as will be seen, did, articulate many black traditions and some socialist and feminist political and cultural forms.

This was because they were articulated as non-antagonistic to the basic conservative nodal points of New Deal State ideology. These included the defence of private and monopoly ownership of capital, neo-Keynesian fiscal subsidies designed to stimulate and maintain private markets, the incorporation of the Congress of Industrial Organisations (C.I.O.) into the State's planning bodies, and the eventual violent suppression of strikes, civil rights and racial minorities. A Marxism which called for the overthrow of the State and capitalist economic and social relations was clearly an antagonistic position. Similarly, a radical feminism which called for the overthrow of patriarchal society would also have been antagonistic to the political ideology of the New Deal State. On the other hand, the reformist or 'New Deal feminism' of such artists as Minna Citron and Concetta Scaravaglione, was mobilised by the Federal Art Project ⁴¹ .

THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT AND 'THE SOCIAL'

The use of the term 'the social' in this thesis involves a particular inflection derived from the work of Laclau and Mouffe. For them, a successful hegemony appears to construct, in a social formation, an absolutely fixed and static system of differences and meanings: the ideal of 'society' as a completed totality or as an accomplished fact. But for Laclau and Mouffe, an hegemony is always only a relative and partial fixity of differences and meanings: 'the social' refers to this openness and the contingency of equivalences and antagonisms. This 'fixity/unfixity' is

the true state of all historical and contemporary societies ⁴² . Raymond Williams describes the 'structure of feeling' within an hegemonized society in terms of:

'in effect, a saturation of the whole process of living - not only of political and economic activity, not only of manifest social activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as specific economic, political and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense' ⁴³

While 'the social' may be partially closed, a 'full positivity' of the complete and final absence of antagonism is impossible ⁴⁴ . If the Federal Art Project, through its discourses and activities, will be seen by this thesis as an attempt to construct 'society' around the basis of Citizenship, Law and the Nation-State of America, then it must be remembered as also an hegemonic project and process, with both its limits and opposition.

Notes To Introduction

1. The term 'America' properly denotes the continent, rather than the geo-political nation-state of 'The United States of America'. To avoid confusion between the term 'state' meaning governmental institutions or individual states in the U.S.A., the geo-political nation-state is largely referred to as 'America'. The use of this term also reflects, of course, the economic, political and cultural dominance of the U.S.A. over the continent.
2. This also includes transcripts of speeches given by Federal Art Project staff, transcripts of radio broadcasts involving the Project, and materials produced by institutions - such as schools, hospitals, prisons, etc - which had connections with Federal Art Project activity. This thesis centres on the Federal Art Project because it was an agency created entirely by the Roosevelt Administration, while the other art projects (discussed briefly in Chapter 1) were regulated by U.S. Treasury protocols which preceded the New Deal.
3. For example, the U.S. State's mobilisation of Abstract Expressionism as a form of 'cultural diplomacy' during the Cold War. For a collection of the articles which have dealt with this, see Francis Frascina (ed.) Pollock And After: The Critical Debate (Harper & Row; London, 1985).
4. The final part of the thesis involves a reading of contemporary art magazines - most notably, The American Magazine Of Art and Art Digest. The thesis argues that the mid and late 1930s saw a protracted struggle over the meanings of 'art' and 'artist' in America and that the art magazines were a prime site for this struggle.
5. Dore Ashton says that this milieu 'many experienced for the first time on the project...it proved to be the catalyst that was to change the diffident American painter into a professional who would finally see himself as an equal in the world of modern art', The Life And Times Of The New York School (Adams & Dart; London, 1972), p.51. Emily Wasserman, in The American Scene: Early Twentieth Century (Lamplight; New York, 1970) says that the creation of federal galleries, community art centres, travelling exhibitions and art museum lectures, all under the aegis of the art projects, were important for fostering national art appreciation and that the mural competitions organised by the Government may have been precursors of the large mural-type canvases made by Abstract Expressionists after the war.
6. The seductive logic of this teleology can be seen in Emily Wasserman (ibid.) and Barbara Rose, American Painting: The Twentieth Century (S.K.I.R.A.; New York, 1973). Wasserman says 'In the early 1900s it would have been farfetched to believe that within fifty years a distinctive American art would be accepted and admired by an American audience. That any strictly native style would eventually establish itself and its leadership over Europe's modern movements would have seemed even more incredible', p.1. Rose says that 'for the true

Renaissance, the Americans would have to wait until the School of Paris masters themselves made their homes in New York, as the provincial centers of the Renaissance awaited the arrival of a travelling Italian!; p.31. As Serge Guilbaut says, in How New York Stole The Idea Of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom And The Cold War (University Of Chicago Press, 1984), the history of twentieth century American art is written in terms of the problems which confronted the development of modernism (see Introduction).

7. There were also major Federal Music, Theatre and Writers' Projects.
8. The possibility of a fascist coup, for example. See Raymond G. Swing's Forerunners Of American Fascism (Books For Libraries Press; New York, 1935). For a discussion of the development and implications of state monopoly capitalism in America, see Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy's Monopoly Capital: An Essay On The American Economic And Social Order (Modern Reader Paperbacks; New York, 1966). On the other hand, as Greta Berman says in The Lost Years: Mural Painting In New York City Under The Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project, 1935-1943 (Garland; New York, 1978): 'During Harry Truman's tenure as President between 1945 and 1953 attempts were made in many quarters to destroy Roosevelt's image and everything associated with it. Up to the mid 1950s under Eisenhower, senator McCarthy's House UnAmerican Activities Committee steadily gained momentum, causing fear of any possible socialism or communism in the country. Many tried to hide the fact that they had participated on the Works Progress Administration. Some W.P.A. Federal Art Project art works may have been destroyed by those who feared that they were somehow tainted with communism', p.10.
9. Rose says that most of the art works produced on the project 'were mediocre compromises with academicism in a heavy-handed dull illustrational style that had neither the authority of academic art nor the unpretentious charm of the illustration (op cit., p.36). Ian Bennett, in A History Of American Painting (Hamlyn; New York, 1973) says 'the wonder of it all was that as so many critics have pointed out, when the W.P.A. ceased in 1943, so little of real worth had resulted', p.197. Francois Mathey, in American Realism: A Pictorial Survey From The Early Eighteenth Century To The Nineteen-Seventies (S.K.I.R.A.; Geneva, 1976), says 'It...goes without saying that good intentions when democratically inspired, are inevitably blind, and that therefore it should come as no surprise that the result of the operation, in qualitative terms, was slender', p.143. Emily Wasserman, op cit., says 'much of the work turned out under the projects now appears stylistically irrelevant', p.12.
10. Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now (New York Graphic Society; Greenwich, 1969); The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs (Smithsonian Institution Press; Washington, 1972); Art For The Millions: Essays From The 1930s By Artists And

- Administrators Of The Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (New York Graphic Society; N Greenwich, 1973).
11. The New Deal For Artists (Princeton University Press, 1973).
 12. The Lost Years: Mural Painting In New York City Under The Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project 1935-1943.
 13. Wall To Wall America: A Cultural History Of The Post-Office Murals In The Great Depression (University of Minnesota Press; Minneapolis, 1982).
 14. New Deal For Art: The Government Art Projects Of The 1930s, With Examples From New York City And State (Gallery Association of New York State; Hamilton, 1977).
 15. 'Art Of The People: The New Deal Quest For A Cultural Democracy', Journal Of American History September 1975; vol.lxvii, no.2.
 16. For O'Connor 'one can not escape the reality that something very vital - indeed something revolutionary - happened to American culture during the 1930s', The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, p.4. Berman regards it as a unique period in American art, op cit., p.12, while Marling speculates that Abstract Expressionism may have been a flowering of experimental art after the official suppression in the 1930s, op. cit., p.25.
 17. The general politicization of cultural production in New Deal America is recognised by most histories of the period as a factor that can not be ignored and this normally leads to the work of the so-called 'Regionalists' and the more general category of 'Realist' artists being doubly discounted by art historians committed to modernism. If Geldzahler dismisses Benton, Wood and Curry for their formal banality and lack of a 'fresh, formal language' (American Painting In The Twentieth Century, New York Graphic Society; New York, 1965, p.108), Evergood and Levine are accused of not only 'little more than illustrational reformulations of academic painting' (Barbara Rose, op cit., p.43) but also of a hollow political posturing (Ian Bennett, op cit., p.199). The positive valorization of Ben Shahn's Sacco And Vanzetti series (1931-2) takes place at the cost of any specific historical or political reference. According to Bennett, 'Social and political protest is a timeless activity...the tragedy and indignation of Shahn's Sacco And Vanzetti series, a powerful indictment of injustice and inhumanity will certainly impress the sensitive beholder long after the event which prompted the statement has faded into history', op cit., p.199.
 18. The text of this thesis contains the employment of a theoretical apparatus; the notes are often concerned to question or nuance particular aspects of the theoretical elements which have been mobilised. The notes also serve the traditional purpose of providing additional research evidence and bibliographic reference.
 19. Nicos Poulantzas State, Power, Socialism (Verso; London, 1979). Ernesto Laclau Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory (Verso; London, 1982); Ernesto Laclau and Chantal

- Mouffe Hegemony And Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical, Democratic Politics (Verso; London, 1985).
 Chantal Mouffe Gramsci And Marxist Theory (Routledge Kegan Paul; London, 1979).
20. According to Chantal Mouffe, an hegemonic class 'is a class which has been able to articulate the interests of other social groups to its own by means of ideological struggle', Gramsci And Marxist Theory, p.181.
 21. Poulantzas defines the capitalist state as a factor of cohesion in Political Power And Social Classes (Verso; London, 1978): 'The State's global role as the cohesive factor in a social formation can, as such, be distinguished in particular modalities concerning the different levels of a formation, i.e., in functions which are economic, ideological and political in the strict sense of the term', p.53. Although problems in the theorising of the nature and function of the capitalist state are discussed in the thesis, the state should be understood as an historically specific and 'complex institutional ensemble of forms of representation and intervention', while state power should be seen as 'a form-determined reflection of the balance of political forces', see Bob Jessop The Capitalist State (Martin Robinson; Oxford, 1982, p.xiv).
 22. That is, the monographic orthodoxy of traditional art history.
 23. For a discussion of this, see Milton Brown The Modern Spirit: American Painting 1908-1935 (Arts Council Of Great Britain; London, 1977) 'Urban and Social Realism'.
 24. '...the particular form in which the hegemonic ethico-political element presents itself in the life of the State and the country is "patriotism" and "nationalism", which is "popular religion": that is to say it is the link by means of which the unity of leaders and led is effected', Antonio Gramsci, quoted in Chantal Mouffe, op cit., p.194.
 25. ibid.. Included among 'National?Popular' elements are notions of democracy, national identity and cultural/folk traditions.
 26. See Ernesto Laclau's 'Towards A Theory Of Populism' in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory.
 27. The theoretical apparatus used in this thesis is drawn extensively from the third chapter of Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, 'Beyond The Positivity Of The Social: Antagonisms And Hegemony'. There is a useful summary of Laclau and Mouffe's work in Bob Jessop The Capitalist State, pp.191-202.
 28. 'Whenever we use the category of "subject" in this text, we will do so in the sense of "subject positions" within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot, therefore, be the origin of social relations - not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that render an experience possible - as all "experience" depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.115. See the section 'The Category Of "Subject"', pp.114-122.
 29. Louis Althusser Leñin And Philosophy And Other Essays (Monthly Review Press; London, 1971), pp.174-175.

30. For a discussion of 'articulatory principles', see Laclau Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, pp. 160-165. 'The political discourses of various classes for example, will consist of antagonistic efforts of articulation in which each class presents itself as the authentic representative of "the people", of "the national interest", and so on.', p.161. For a discussion of the concept of 'nodal points', see Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.112-114: 'We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation [of discourse] nodal points', p.112.
31. 'Overdetermination', in the sense intended here, ~~is~~ corresponds closely to Raymond Williams' definition in Marxism And Literature (Oxford University Press, 1977): 'The concept of "overdetermination" is an attempt to avoid the isolation of autonomous categories [or subject-positions] but at the same time to emphasise relatively autonomous yet ofcourse interactive practices [or subject-positions]', p.88. The objection may be raised that to presuppose the a priori existence of 'individual subjects' rather than, as in Marxist theory, social classes, is to deny the primacy of political class struggle. While the ontological primacy of class struggle is certainly in question - in relation to other forms of struggle (gender, ethnic, colonial, etc) - it should be remembered that a class subjectivity is a classed subjectivity: a discursive construction, not an a priori property derived from one's location in the relations of economic production. Poulantzas persuasively argues that the discourse of Citizenship and Law produced by the State works to divide the working class ('the isolation effect', in Political Power And Social Classes) 'This state presents itself as the incarnation of the popular will of the people/nation. The people/nation is institutionally fixed as the ensemble of "citizens" or "individuals" whose unity is represented by the capitalist state: its real substratum is precisely this isolating effect manifested by the Capitalist Mode of Production's socio-economic relations', p.133.
32. Again, these equivalences should be seen as tendential, i.e. particular discourses may have differing extents of equivalence. The equivalences discussed in the Introduction to the thesis are necessarily illustrative abstractions. Specific historical discourses are discussed in the thesis.
33. It should be remembered that, in an important sense, subjects do not choose to become citizens of a nation-state: they are subject to it and the state freely exercises power over them. However, it may be useful to conceive of a bifurcation: 'the responsible Citizen' and 'the aberrant Citizen'.
34. Laclau and Mouffe say 'we will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference

- that is not discursively articulated.', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.105. Borrowing from Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the unity of a discourse - the regulated coherence of an enunciation - is derived not from (a) reference to the same object, (b) a common style in the production of statements, (c) constancy of the concepts or (d) reference to a common theme. Rather it is produced through a 'regularity-in-dispersion': an ensemble of differential positions fixed by nodal points in configuration, Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp. 105-106. The ordering of equivalential subject-positions in relation to the over-determining subject-position of Citizen, as in Federal Art Project discourse, constitutes such a 'regularity-in-dispersion'.
35. *ibid.*, p.125. For example, the equivalence between the subject-position 'Black' and the subject-position 'Worker' in Federal Art Project discourse is a simple or non-antagonistic difference. On the other hand, for example, in Ku Klux Klan discourse, we might presume that the subject-position 'Black' and the subject-position 'Citizen' is an antagonistic difference. Being antagonistic, they can not be equivalential.
 36. See Laclau and Mouffe Hegemony And Socialist Strategy 'Equivalence And Difference', pp.127-134.
 37. '...a relation of equivalence absorbing all the positive determinations of the colonizer in opposition to the colonized, does not create a system of positive differential positions between the two, simply because it dissolves all positivity: the colonizer is discursively constructed as the anti-colonized', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.128. The 'Other' in this case is that conglomerate antagonism: the Non-American.
 38. The State, rather than being a simple 'instrument' or 'expression' of the ruling class - as in much Marxist theory - must be understood as a fragmented and dispersed ensemble of agencies requiring mechanisms for the construction of its internal unity and external representation.
 39. Again, this must be understood as a tendential process - obviously, some groupings, such as members of the American Communist Party, were not successfully interpellated as Citizen-subjects.
 40. Specificity of analysis is essential. After the inauguration of Popular Frontism by the Comintern in 1935, some Marxist political parties worked precisely to identify their interests with that of the New Deal.
 41. See the interesting catalogue 7 American Women: The Depression Decade by Karal A. Marling and Helen A. Harrison (Vassar College Of Art; Hamilton, New York, 1976).
 42. See Laclau's discussion of the differential articulations of nationalism, in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, p.160.
 43. Marxism And Literature, p.110. For Williams' concept of 'structure of feeling', see pp.128-135.
 44. '...if...the social only exists as a partial effort

for constructing society - that is, an objective
and closed system of differences - antagonism, as
a witness of the impossibility of a final suture,
is the "experience" of the limit of the social',
Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.125.

CHAPTER 1

The Depression And The New Deal:
Artistic Production In The early 1930s

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION BEFORE
THE NEW DEAL

The hegemony of modernist accounts of the development of American art in the twentieth century, centred around the genesis of Abstract Expressionism, has led to a severe neglect of both the art and the conditions of artistic production in America prior to 1940. A detailed discussion of the conditions and relations of production of art in this period must begin with the recognition that the subject-position 'artist' and the category of 'artistic production' itself, are chronically problematic. Further, as this thesis will show, the problematic nature of these categorical distinctions, particularly in articulation with the growth of Modernist aesthetics in America, was central to the discourses on culture and society produced by the Federal Art Project.

While it is possible to document the growth of exhibitions and collections, galleries and patrons in America during the 1920s and 1930s, it is far harder to arrive at accurate conclusions about the size and demography of 'artists' and the distribution of centres of 'artistic production'. The view of Audrey McMahon, the director of the Federal Art Project in New York City, and of Ed Laning, a painter on the Project, that few artists had ever been able to make a living through selling art either before or after the Slump in 1929, and that the Depression merely removed secondary employment, is supported by a story reputedly told by John Sloan. It described:

'a terrible holocaust in no man's land. It was a black night and the blasted landscape was lighted only by shellbursts and flares. Over the side of a shell crater scrambled a millionaire, seeking refuge from the bombardment. When at the bottom of the hole his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he saw he was not alone. Another figure was lurking down there. "Who are you and what are you doing here?", demanded the millionaire. His companion replied "I'm an artist. I live here"' 1

F.V. O'Connor suggests that the Depression 'severely hurt the artist probably more than any other group of workers in the country' ² . He says that the number of artists and art teachers fell significantly during the 1930s, while both the population and labour force grew. ³ . This is in contrast to his findings that between 1920 and 1930, the number of persons 'claiming to be artists, sculptors and art teachers' increased by more than half, due to the prosperity and demand for 'luxury goods' in the so-called 'New Era' ⁴ . After the collapse of the stock market prices for art in October 1929 ⁵ , to the point in 1933 when O'Connor calculates there were ten thousand unemployed artists out of a total of an estimated fifteen million unemployed workers ⁶ , he says that the intervening four years are almost completely undocumented. Given this situation, anecdote and personal observations seem to be as valid a source of 'documentation' as highly problematic statistical information. Chet la More, an artist employed on the Federal Art Project, said that artists in America had always been economically underprivileged and the Depression merely intensified that downward sliding ⁷ . He concluded, in fact, that in many cases relief on the New Deal was even an improvement on

some artists previous circumstances. He blamed the nature of the art market and the system of private patronage, the failure of which to sustain contemporary American artists was:

'based upon its utter inadequacy as a means of distributing contemporary art to a sufficiently large section of the population to ensure an audience for that art and consequently stable financial support upon which basis the movement could develop...The art market failed because it was predicated upon the exclusive support of the top flight economic groups and relied upon upper class philanthropy to bring art to the people as a whole' 8

By 1932 artists had begun to organise hunger marches in major cities and in May of that year outdoor sales of art works were organised by some of New York's estimated three thousand artists ⁹ .

Despite the fact that the report commissioned by President Hoover in 1929, Recent Social Trends, concluded that:

'for the overwhelming majority of the American people the fine arts of painting and sculpture in their noncommercial [?], nonindustrial forms do not exist' 10

O'Connor argues that a minor boom in the art market in 1928 and 1929 had been brought to an end by the Depression. He reported that between 1925 and 1929 there had been a 263% increase in the export of art from the United States. The central issue was that regarding the extent to which such sales figures reflected the existence and survival of contemporary American artists as opposed to that of pre-twentieth century or European artists. Holger Cahill, the director of the Federal Art Project, was to say in the

catalogue for the Project exhibition held at the Museum
Of Modern Art in 1936:

'During the middle twenties there was an art boom of respectable proportions associated with the stock market boom in those years, but in this, the American artists hardly shared at all. He had become a step child in his own country. All this effort to conform to contemporary European practice and to American admiration of this had really pleased nobody - perhaps least of all himself' 11

This is born out in the figures that show, again using that problematic general category of 'artistic production', that the sales of American artists' work in 1930 valued at twenty million dollars, was less than one tenth of the estimated total sale value of imported art, estimated at two hundred and fifty million dollars ¹² .

Jacob Kainen, a printmaker on the Graphic Division of the Federal Art Project, in a conversation with O'Connor, said that indigenous art was at its lowest ebb in the late 1920s and early 1930s ¹³ . Audrey McMahon talked of the paucity of institutional support for contemporary American artists:

'With the exception of the Whitney, you couldn't get a living artist into a permanent collection. Even an up and coming museum person like Francis Henry Taylor who was director of the Worcester Museum never bought for his collection' 14

This situation was in marked contrast to the institutional support for the buying and selling and exhibiting of European art. The struggle for the establishment of Modernist ideas, artists and a market in which to sell Modernism to a new audience is largely regarded as an historical inevitability in Modernist histories of the period. While the Steiglitz and Arensberg circles ¹⁵ before

the Armoury Show ¹⁶, and the establishment of the Daniel, Bourgeois, Carroll and Modern Galleries in the years after the show are said to have led to the creation of a market and a platform for primarily European modernists ¹⁷, the growth of the number of American artists and collectors is indexed by the 1916 and 1917 Independent Shows of American art and Steiglitz's opening of The Intimate Gallery (1925-1929) and An American Place (1929-1946), both of which were reserved for native modernist artists. In more general terms, in 1924 the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum was opened, followed by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1931 and its biennales in 1932. Before its opening and that of the Museum Of Modern Art in 1929, the Corcoran Biennale and the Carnegie Institute had been the only substantial institutional spaces available for the exhibition of contemporary American art.

With the collapse of the stock market in October 1929 and the resulting slump, artists in New York City were considered worthy of relief by a number of upper-middle class charity funds, set up in the absence of any large scale or integrated state relief funds. According to O'Connor, artists were broadly categorised as 'white-collar workers' and given a degree of 'professional status'. The most important of these was the so-called Gibson Committee which in August 1931 raised over twenty million dollars for the economic assistance of white-collar unemployed. This was administered through the New York State Emergency Work Bureau. The College Art Association approached the Gibson Committee in 1932 and the three

organisations jointly began to administer a very limited degree of economic aid to a small number of artists in New York City. In the same year President Hoover was forced to establish a federal emergency relief fund which lent money (at interest) to states, to spend on relief programmes: what relief there was for artists was available for distribution through the already existing structures of state relief agencies. In New York City, as well as the Gibson Committee/College Art Association fund, Mrs. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had begun a private relief project of her own, giving fifty dollar cheques to selected artists ¹⁸ . In September 1931 the New York State legislature passed the Wicks Act, which established the New York State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration. This body superseded the Gibson Committee in funding the Emergency Work Bureau and up to August 1st 1933 one hundred artists were employed on various work-relief schemes, about which almost nothing is known ¹⁹ . The Temporary Emergency Relief Administration in New York was incapable of keeping up with the artists' demands for relief and could provide aid for only a fraction of the estimated three thousand artists resident in the city.

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN CAPITALISM AND THE NEW DEAL

An analysis of the particular conditions of artists and the art market in America in the early 1930s must be related to an understanding of the general crisis in American capitalism. Although the collapse of the New York stock market in late October 1929 has been dominantly seen as

the origin of the Depression in the United States ²⁰ , this apocalyptic event has been mobilised to ellide or negate the instability and structural crisis within the economy which persisted, at various levels, throughout the post- First World War 'New Era'. Douglas F. Dowd describes this period as that of a 'dual economy' in which booming new industries - primarily automobile production - coexisted with loss-making sectors of the economy, such as the railroads, cotton, coal-mining and agriculture ²¹ . Baran and Sweezy's account of the American social and economic order states that:

'the stagnationist tendencies inherent in monopoly capitalism had already begun to dominate the economic scene in the years after 1907...What the economists persist in regarding as a deviation was in fact the realisation in practice of the theoretical norm toward which the system is always tending' ²²

Growing concentration and centralisation of productive forces, tendential elimination of 'free' competition and the increasing power of bank and financial capital ²³ , had led to a persistent level of unemployment in the United States between 1920 and 1930 ²⁴ . Rises in productivity had meant, in the mining industry along, the shedding of two hundred thousand workers. While the stock market grew from the Dow Jones average of 99 in October 1925 to 381 in September 1929, unemployment had risen from 1.5 million to 2.86 million in 1929 ²⁵ . Dixon Wecter estimates that of all stock market transactions in 1929, ninety per cent were gambling ventures and not permanent investments ²⁶ .

In the period from the collapse of the stock market to the election of Roosevelt in November 1932, the United States' Gross National Product fell from one hundred and four billion dollars to fifty six billion dollars ²⁷. Unemployment rose to at least one quarter of the entire workforce in 1933. Urban workers received an average wage cut of forty per cent in the period 1929 to 1933 ²⁸. D.K. Adams reports that in the state of Illinois in 1931, the Red Cross could only afford to spend seventy five cents per week on each family ²⁹. The size and depth of the recession was such that no accurate official figures on national unemployment were even available until Hoover's Recent Social Trends report was published in 1933. Estimates still range from eight and a half million to seventeen million during the mid-1930s ³⁰. In 1931 the Soviet Union advertised in America for 6000 skilled workers and received 100,000 applications ³¹. It was within these conditions of systemic economic and social crises that the New Deal art projects were introduced. The projects must be understood within the context of the ensemble of measures which Roosevelt took when the Democratic Party took office. Roosevelt's election in 1932 and the celebrated '100 Days' which followed his inauguration in 1933 saw the creation of a large number of federal agencies and legislative acts designed to bring some relief to the population and to engineer the recovery and rationalisation of American monopoly capitalism. Though a large part of the 'Roosevelt myth' argues that the Democratic Administration's interventions at federal level had no real precedent, Raymond Morley - one of Roosevelt's advisers - later said that

nothing in principle had been opposed by Hoover. In fact:

'most of the reforms that were put through might have been agreeable to Hoover, if he had had the political power to put them over. They were all latent in Hoover's thinking, especially the bank rescue. The rescue was not done by Roosevelt - he signed the papers - but by Hoover's left-overs in the Administration. They knew what to do'

32

The New Deal's major acts and agencies were applied in broadly five areas of administration. In Government, attempts were quickly made to balance the Budget and alter and extend the political structure of federal and state administration. The National Industrial Recovery Administration and the Emergency Railroad Transportation Act were implemented to enable the recovery of industry and to stimulate inter-state commerce. The massive Agricultural Adjustment programme was introduced to 'rationalise' production ³³ and support with credit and assurances the hundredsof thousands of small tenant farmers evicted or threatened with eviction for unpaid debts. In terms of financial controls, the regulatory Emergency Banking Act and the Economy Act were introduced to control credit facilities and securities, while later on in the Administration, the American dollar was taken off the Gold Standard.

The identification of the Democratic Administration's planning strategy and thinking with Keynesian deficit-financing theory - a key-stone of American liberal historiography-- is in part associated with the relief measures introduced by the Government, establishing

national employment agencies, distress relief boards, mortgage relief, public works agencies and the Civilian Conservation Corps, which took four million unemployed people from the cities and marshalled them in quasi-military style for work on the land. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, introduced as an expediency by Harry Hopkins, one of Roosevelt's top administrators in the spring of 1933, was to be followed first by the Civil Works Administration in autumn 1933 and then by the Works Progress Administration, under which the Federal Art Project was organised ³⁴ .

Before discussing the development of the three art projects which preceded the Federal Art Project in 1935, each of which had their own quite distinctive administrative base and operational procedures, it is important to signal a theoretical problem involved with analysing the State in America in the 1930s. This is concerned with the relation of intended purposes to the structural effects of the New Deal - both in general, and in terms of the analysis of the art projects in particular. An adequate understanding must involve a recognition of the stratified nature of planning policy and operation across federal, state and local administrative boundaries. This analysis must theoretically acknowledge the activity of a plurality of planning forces, pressures and interests as well as the active determinations outside the control of 'intending' agents and organisations. If the State is to be understood, following Poulantzas as a 'condensation of social forces and relations', with a material institutional specificity, then it can possess no unitary or coherent intentionality ³⁵ .

The analysis of this thesis relies upon a complex conception of an over-determined and antagonistic matrix of effective forces and actions ³⁶ .

According to Smith and Siracusa, the New Deal represented the culmination of a half century of historical change marking the rise of an organised capitalism and the development of the regulatory, interventionist state ³⁷ . Arthur Ekirsch identifies the period between 1929 and 1941 as that when the American people began to see 'the national state as the basic arbiter and fundamental factor in their lives' ³⁸ . It was also the period that saw the emergence of a particular type of modern nationalism. This has been characterised in the Introduction as a 'National-Popular' discourse. Its articulatory principle consisted of interpellating subjects as units of an homogenous citizenry and 'State-subjectivity'. Roosevelt's own discourse presented this articulation as the dissolution of social antagonisms in America. With such a unification 'our society, rich and poor, manual worker and brain worker' would be cemented:

'into a voluntary brotherhood of freemen,
standing and striving together, for the
common good of all' 39

This discourse was to be central to the reconstruction of a capitalist hegemony in New Deal America after the general ideological crisis engendered by the early years of the Depression. It was to be articulated through the extension and intervention of the federal State, under Roosevelt, which operated to constitute itself, as Poulantzas called it, as 'the factor of cohesion' within the

social formation ⁴⁰ . The precondition of this process was first the reproduction of the individual subjects as juridico-political subjects-of-the-State, with formal equalities, rights and responsibilities. This process is what Poulantzas called 'the isolation - individuation effect' in the construction of socio-economic relations, its function being to:

'represent the unity of isolated relations
found in the body politic of the people/
nation' 41

Secondly, and specific to the social formation in the United States in the 1930s, hegemony involved the capacity of the Roosevelt Administration to take some limited account of popular interests and demands and to articulate them differentially within the State's dominant legitimating discourse ⁴² . This discourse legitimated the reproduction of a 'rationalised' capitalism under the domination of its monopoly capitalist fraction ⁴³ .

The New Deal's construction of a 'National-Popular' hegemonic discourse, articulating the discursive objects of 'nation', 'state' and 'people' is instantiated in a letter sent by Charles L. Edholm to Roosevelt, on behalf of a group of artists employed on the Public Works Of Art Project:

'You have given us this opportunity to do the best we are capable of in the service of the nation. For many of us it is the chance of a lifetime to put our souls in the work by which we gain a living...We hope that the crisis through which the nation is passing may well be remembered as the period in which American art grew to full stature and took on a vitality and beauty never dreamed of before' 44

It is significant to note that the New Deal's discourse on a 'rationalised capitalism' involved a complex re-articulation of some of the ideological elements of the Populist Movement in the United States of the 1890s, and of the so-called Progressive Years before the First World War, during which measures were proposed to regulate the economy, aid the farmer and develop natural resources in an integrated and rationalised manner ⁴⁵. The agrarian base of this movement is particularly significant and its influence will be seen on the discourses produced by and on the Federal Art Project. The experience of State planning during the First World War provided another important precedent for New Deal ideas and programmes ⁴⁶. Within liberal historiography of the New Deal, Roosevelt's administration has been seen as a benevolent and rationalising paternalism, encouraging the 'co-operation' of labour unions in 'industrial relations' and welcoming radical ideas which genuinely reduced the power of the monopoly capitalists ⁴⁷. This analysis posits a 'middle way' poised between nineteenth laissez faire capitalism and the various modalities of 'statism' developed in Europe and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century ⁴⁸. Within this historiography, the New Deal represents the emergence of a 'co-operative' and 'progressive' federalism. As Barton J. Bernstein put it:

'For most liberal historians the New Deal meant the replenishment of democracy, the rescue of the federal government from the clutches of big business, the significant redistribution of political power. Breaking with laissez faire, the new Administration according to these interpretations, marked the end of the passive or impartial state

and the beginning of positive government,
of the interventionist state acting to
offset concentrations of private power,
and affirming the rights and responding
to the needs of the underprivileged' 49

Such arguments, in specific form and *mutatis mutandis*,
were made, as will be seen, about the intentions and
function of the Federal Art Project.

Contrary to such an analysis, however, is the
argument of Bernstein himself that the so-called
'Roosevelt Revolution' was rather the outcome of a
confined, confused and contradictory pragmatism, the
effects of which were to reproduce monopoly capitalist
power in the United States. In this view, the series of
relief agencies and work relief programmes are seen as
temporary expedients masking the rather more conventional
reluctance of the Administration to reject budget balancing
and self-liquidating projects. Smith and Siracusa argue
that Roosevelt himself never accepted the Keynesian idea
of protracted and massive Federal spending and did not
venture beyond relatively modest emergency measures ⁵⁰ .

The 1935 Social Security Act was built, according
to Bernstein on the efforts of the Progressive Years
before the First World War, while the Unemployment In-
surance provision excluded five million workers or one
fifth of the workforce. Roosevelt himself apparently did
not take any part at all in constructing, and may even
have opposed, the Wagner Act which made trade unions
exempt from civil liability if they undertook strike
action. Even John Dewey, frequently cited as one of the
Administration's spiritual mentors, had criticised New

Deal measures as 'piecemeal measures undertaken ad hoc' ⁵¹ .

Thus, counter to the accusations of communism which were perennially levelled at the New Deal from its inception until the death of Roosevelt and beyond ⁵² , the intervention of the State should instead be seen to have preserved and consolidated the hegemony of monopoly capitalism in the 1930s ⁵³ . According to Adams, the State was to be the 'regulator', not the determiner of economic and social relations, but its inability and unwillingness to atomise corporate power or threaten concentrated capital demonstrates its essentially conservative project ⁵⁴ . Though the Depression compelled Roosevelt and his Administration to experiment and improvise, to borrow ideas and programmes from a variety of sources, its recognition and defence of the eminence of monopoly capitalist interests leads to the necessary identification of its economic, political and ideological strategies as corporatist and populist ⁵⁵ . The art projects and the Federal Art Project in particular, must be located as operative within that strategy.

THE EARLY NEW DEAL ART PROJECTS

The complex nature of that strategy, and of its specific institutional articulation is exemplified through an analysis of the New Deal art projects. O'Connor's research has been mainly concerned with the Federal Art Project, began in late 1935 ⁵⁶ . Although Marling's recent book concentrates on the work produced by The Section Of Painting And Sculpture, this project, along with the earlier

Public Works Of Art Project and the Treasury Relief Art Project, have received comparatively little attention. The reason for this is partly that the Federal Art Project has been generally identified as a particular product of Roosevelt's New Deal, while the other projects have been seen to have had substantive continuities with State patronage of the arts in America before Roosevelt's election. The specificity of the Federal Art Project, in relation to the New Deal, has centred around the issue of 'relief' and 'non-relief' employment by the State.

In November 1933 the Civil Works Administration was founded and established one hundred professional and white-collar job classifications for relief funding. This included the category of 'artists' and Harry Hopkins, the chief relief administrator in Washington, committed over a million dollars to what became the Public Works Of Art Project. It was to operate within the organisational structure of the Civil Works Administration, which had divided the country into sixteen administrative regions. The pre-history of this project is well documented and includes the letter which the artist George Biddle sent to Roosevelt. In this, Biddle had praised the Mexican muralists for:

'producing the greatest national school of mural painters since the Renaissance...The younger artists of America are conscious as they never have been of the social revolution that our country and civilisation are going through and they would be very eager to express their ideals in a permanent art form if they were given the government's co-operation...I am convinced that our mural art, with a little impetus, can soon result, for the first time in our history, in a vital national expression'-----

57

In the project that developed, Hopkins' notion of work relief for all needy artists was compromised by the evident desire of the project's chief administrators to produce, on the project, 'quality' American art for the embellishment of Federal and state buildings. Neither the programme's national director, the corporate capitalist Ed Bruce, or the New York City regional administrator, Juliana Force - on loan from the Whitney Museum - considered the project as predominantly a relief measure. According to O'Connor, the project's advisory committee 'took a very hard line on the qualifications of those to be employed' ⁵⁸. He estimated that it operated with an actual non-relief quota of fifty per cent, employing a total of 3,749 artists for periods varying from one to six months. Varying rates of pay existed, McKinzie says, depending on the evaluation of the quality of the artists employed. Though artists in New York may have seen the project as a relief measure, Juliana Force did not, reflecting instead the orders of Ed Bruce in Washington:

'Quality is of first importance and must be made a consideration in selecting which unemployed artists shall be employed' 59

This policy had been made explicit by Bruce, in a letter to Force in December 1933, two days after the first artists had been employed:

'It is going to take a fine sense of discrimination in all of us to select only those needy artists whose artistic ability is worthy of their employment...We are putting artists to work and not trying to make artists out of bums...' 60

This question of the identification of 'good artists' was to become central to the administration of the Federal Art Project and to its attempts to advertise itself to the nation through the later years of the 1930s when the political opposition to the New Deal and to relief programmes in particular was growing. Within the Public Works Of Art Project the State articulated an administrative bias against Modernist practice in America. The articulation of prescriptions for what was understood as 'representational' rather than 'non-representational' art achieved varying degrees of insistence and clarity on the different projects instituted by the Government and also within the variety of programmes run by these projects. The issue is further complicated by the political preferences of some avowedly communist artists - such as Clifford Whyte - for the use of a 'realist' representational mode in the decoration of the Coit Tower in San Francisco ⁶¹ . On the other hand, the 'abstract' painter Burgoyne Diller and the 'abstract' sculptor Isamu Noguchi both complained about the censorship of their work for Government schemes ⁶² . On the Public Works Of Art Project where the stress was placed on 'in so far as possible the American Scene' ⁶³ , there was a 'suspicion of anything experimental, unconventional, or possibly titillating' ⁶⁴ . Ed Rowan, one of the administrators in charge of the next project, the Section Of Painting And Sculpture, not only divided the artists into three categories - 'good', 'medium' and 'bums' - but also gave orders to his administrators to weed out any 'Mexican

partisans ⁶⁵, abstractionists, academics and other extremists' ⁶⁶. Such an eclectic prohibition indexes the peculiar political and aesthetic complexity of this project's administrative policy. Classifying the particular type of 'representational' art favoured by the project is difficult: a provisional neologism might suitably be 'New Deal Democratic Populist Realism' ⁶⁷.

With the ending of the Public Works Of Art Project, after the exhibition of some of its 'best works' at the Corcoran Gallery in the spring of 1934, direct federal funding of art projects was not to reoccur until the institution of the Works Progress Administration in late 1935. The two intervening projects between the Public Works Of Art Project and the Federal Art Project were both organised and directed from the Treasury Department. These two projects had little if anything to do with the notions of 'cultural democracy' which Holger Cahill was to consider the purpose of the Federal Art Project. The Section Of Painting And Sculpture, financed as it was from the Treasury building decoration fund, did not rely on 'high profile' New Deal financial appropriations which kept the Works Progress Administration in operation and in controversy for its spending policies. Ed Bruce regarded the Section as 'mandated to acquire masterpieces for government' ⁶⁸. According to Ed Laning, it relied solely upon the principle of selectivity, with its advisory committee consisting of T.H. Benton, J.S. Curry, Rockwell Kent, Reginald Marsh, Henry Varnum Poor, Boardman Robinson and Grant Wood. Thus it too, in terms of its

managerial control, was heavily antagonistic to Modernism. The project was seen by Olin Dows, an administrator on the Section, not:

'as a palliative for social dislocation, but
as a proved and effective method of acquiring
painting and sculpture for public buildings' 69

and, as such, in direct continuity with past State patronage of the arts in America ⁷⁰. This history of the tradition of mural painting is also largely that of the entire history of Government patronage of the arts prior to the New Deal ⁷¹.

The Section Of Painting And Sculpture was to exist, in modified form until 1943, but it was in 1935 that the second Treasury-based art project was established, although this time funded by an allocation of a half million dollars from the newly-created Works Progress Administration. What was to eventually become the Federal Art Project had actually been offered to Bruce at the Treasury, who had refused to undertake what he regarded as a too large and diverse relief plan. This second Treasury programme, the Treasury Relief Art Project, operated within the regulations of the Works Progress Administration, and employed ninety per cent of artists from the relief rolls, who were engaged to embellish small federal buildings, such as post-offices, which had no previous financial allocation for decoration. Only employing 440 artists during its four years of activity, its value was extremely limited in terms of its function as a federal relief agency, considering the national extent of registered unemployed artists. Its inception

was followed rapidly by that of the Federal Art Project, under the administration and financial aegis of the Works Progress Administration. The Federal Art Project's administrative organisation and management is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes To Chapter 1

1. Ed Laning, in The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, edited by F.V. O'Connor, p.81.
2. F.V.O'Connor, in Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.59.
3. *ibid.*, p.59. The number of artists and art teachers fell by 9.2% while the population grew by 7.2% and the labour force by 8.1%.
4. *ibid.*, p.59. Those calling themselves 'artists' rose from 35,402 to 57,267, p.60. However, as has been indicated, such categorical distinctions present severe, in not unsurmountable problems for quantitative analysis. O'Connor points out that salaried commercial artists, working in advertising, illustration and design represented one of the two chief classes of vocation in art, the other being those who worked on their own, without a regular income and which included professional painters and sculptors.
5. See O'Connor, *ibid.*. In 1929 the price for art stood at 165 before the Slump. In 1930 it had fallen to 100 and in 1933 to 50. O'Connor says that art was calculated to be the worst possible investment when comparing prices between 1925 and 1933.
6. *ibid.*, p.16.
7. Chet la More, in Art For The Millions, edited by F.V. O'Connor, p.237.
8. *ibid.*, p.237.
9. This is estimated by O'Connor to be about one third of the total population of artists practicing in the United States in the 1930s.
10. In R.D. McKinzie, New Deal For Artists, p.4.
11. Holger Cahill, in New Horizons In American Art (1936), quoted in O'Connor Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.61.
12. *ibid.*, p.61. Imports of 'art objects' between 1929 and 1933 had fallen 80.6% while exports in the same period had fallen 81.1%.
13. Jacob Kainen, in O'Connor, The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, p.308.
14. *ibid.*.
15. Alfred Steiglitz and Walter Arensberg both maintained 'circles' for avant garde artists and friends and are considered the two poles around which early American modernist initiatives revolved. Steiglitz devoted himself to Brancusi, Rodin, Matisse, Picasso and the Americans Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Charles Sheeler and Gaston Lachaise. The '291' gallery was open for the exhibition of European and American modernist artists from 1908 to 1917.
16. The official title of the exhibition was the International Exhibition of Modern Art. It was held at the quarters of the 69th Regiment of the National Guard in New York City, from February 17th 1913. The show was seen by 300,000 people during its time in New York, Boston and Chicago.
17. Also important was the Societe Anonyme established in 1920 by Katherine Dreier, Marcel Duchamp, Wassily Kandinsky and others. Crucially important for the later

- institutionalisation of European Modernism in the United States, were the private collections of Lillie Bliss (which later became the basis for the collection of the Museum Of Modern Art), Walter Arensberg (which later became the collection of the Chicago Art Institute) and Arthur Jerome Eddy (which later became the property of the Philadelphia Museum Of Art).
18. See The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, p.53.
 19. See Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.31. Roosevelt was the governor of New York State from 1928 until his inauguration as President in 1933. The New York State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration eventually became the model for Roosevelt's federal relief programme.
 20. On October 24th 1929, 'Black Thursday', thirteen million shares were sold; on October 29th there was a record sale of 16,410,000 or fifteen billion dollars worth of shares. By the end of the year it grew to forty billion dollars. See Dixon Wecter The Age Of The Great Depression 1929-1941 (MacMillan; New York, 1962).
 21. See Douglas F. Dowd The Twisted Dream: Capitalist Development In The U.S. Since 1776 (Winthrop, Cambridge, 1977).
 22. See Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy Monopoly Capital: An Essay On The American Economic And Social Order, p.240.
 23. *ibid.*, as they say 'We must recognise that competition which was the predominant form of market relations in nineteenth century Britain, has ceased to occupy that position, not only in Britain, but everywhere in the capitalist world. Today the typical economic unit in the capitalist world is not the small firm producing a negligible fraction of an homogenous output for an anonymous market, but a large scale enterprise producing a significant share of the output of an industry, or even several industries, and able to control its prices, the volume of production and even the types and amounts of its investments', p.6.
 24. *ibid.*, p.98. This was running in the region of 5% to 11%.
 25. The Age Of The Great Depression, p.8.
 26. *ibid.*, p.5.
 27. The Twisted Dream: Capitalist Development In The U.S. Since 1776, p.103.
 28. Unemployment was estimated at about fifteen million in March 1933.
 29. D.K. Adams Franklin Delano Roosevelt And The New Deal (Hart Talbot; Saffron Walden, 1979), p.18.
 30. See Frederick Allen Since Yesterday: The 1930s In America (Harper & Bros.; New York, 1940), p.58.
 31. See Daniel Smith and Joseph Siracusa The Testing Of America (Forum; St. Louis, 1979), p.129.
 32. Raymond Morley, quoted in Studs Terkel Hard Times (Washington Square Press; New York, 1978), p.289.
 33. This 'rationalisation' involved the attempt to maintain prices by slaughtering six million young pigs and two hundred thousand sows. The Agricultural Adjustment

- Act also led to the ploughing under of ten million acres of cotton. By identifying the problem as 'over production' rather than as 'under consumption', doubt is thrown on a historiographical orthodoxy that the New Deal was a programmatic implementation of Keynesian economic policies.
34. The extent to which the relief work programmes were introduced as a series of expediciencies by the Administration also throws serious doubt on the claims that the New Deal measures were a coherent and programmatic strategy of State intervention. According to Barton J. Bernstein 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', in Barton J. Bernstein (ed.) Towards A New Past: Dissenting Essays In American History (Pantheon; New York, 1968), 'In essence the history of those first years was to be repeated again and again. Year after year the Administration found the number of unemployed men running unexpectedly large, found its funds running out, confronted the new crisis with a new appeal to Congress for more billions of dollars and hastily improvised new and glowing plans', p.175. As will be seen, this inveterate return to Congress for more billions of dollars characterised the history of the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Art Project, virtually from its inception in 1935.
 35. See the theory of the capitalist state produced by Nicos Poulantzas in Political Power And Social Classes, and in State, Power, Socialism. Poulantzas' formulations will be used extensively in this thesis.
 36. Poulantzas is rightfully insistent that the State should not be regarded as 'an intrinsic entity' (State, Power, Socialism, p.128). Rather, 'it is...a relationship of forces, or more precisely the material condensation of such a relationship among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the State in a necessarily specific form', *ibid.*, p.128-129. Within the analysis of the New Deal State and in particular, the Federal Art Project, it is crucial to avoid either personifying or objectifying 'the State'. As Poulantzas continues 'Regarded as a Thing, in the manner of the old instrumentalist conception, the State is a passive, or even neutral, tool which is so completely manipulated by one class or fraction that it is divested of any autonomy whatsoever', *ibid.*, p.129. On the other hand, 'conceived as a Subject, the State enjoys an absolute autonomy that refers to its will as the supposedly rationalising instance of civil society', *ibid.*, p.129. In the case of the New Deal 'in general' (already an illicit totalisation) it can not be understood to have been 'caused' either 'by Roosevelt' or by 'the bourgeoisie' understood as an abstract social class; similarly, the Federal Art Project was not 'the product' of Holger Cahill or an 'instrument' simply mobilised by 'the ruling class'.
 37. The Testing Of America, p.166.
 38. Arthur A. Ekirsch Ideologies And Utopias: The Impact Of The New Deal Upon American Thought (Quadrangle Books; Chicago, 1969) p.viii.

39. Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted in Ideology And Utopias: The Impact Of The New Deal Upon American Thought, p.100. Such a systematic enumeration is characteristic of this 'National-Popular' discourse produced within the State during the 1930s. It is examined in more detail in the following chapters of this thesis. This process of homogenisation takes place through what Poulantzas - drawing on Foucault - calls 'individualisation'. In State, Power, Socialism he says 'The specialisation and centralisation of the capitalist state, its hierarchical bureaucratic functioning and its elective institutions all involve the atomisation of the body-politics into what are called 'individuals' - that is, juridical-political persons who are the subjects of certain freedoms.' (p.63). The state thus represents these subjects as 'equivalent monads' (p.63).
40. Political Power And Social Classes, p.44. See Introduction, note 21.
41. *ibid.*, p.134.
42. 'Corporatism' is the term normally used in characterising such a political discourse/strategy and implies the articulation of a political discourse - in this case, 'New Deal National-Populism' to a specific class position, namely that of the bourgeoisie under the leadership of the monopoly-capitalist fraction. For a discussion of this, see Ernesto Laclau 'Towards A Theory Of Populism', in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, pp.143-199.
43. This must not lead us to assume that State intervention is a phenomena specific or limited to monopoly capitalist societies. As Poulantzas points out: 'There was never a stage of capitalism in which the State did not play an important economic role: the 'liberal state' confined to policing competitive capitalism, has always been a myth. Nevertheless a new State role characterises the imperialist stage. It is known as the interventionist state because of the profound repercussions of the stage on the political forms of the capitalist state, in relation to other forms', in Fascism And Dictatorship (New Left Books; London, 1974), p.20.
44. Quoted in Ideologies And Utopias: The Impact Of The New Deal Upon American Thought, p.148. While this thesis is concerned with analysing the State's hegemonic discourse produced specifically within the Federal Art Project, the directly repressive/violent actions of the State during the 1930s must not be forgotten. Poulantzas' early formulation of 'the integral State' was that of 'hegemony and armed coercion'. Also see Chapter 5, note 2 of this thesis.
45. This is exemplified in the construction of the Tennessee Valley Authority by the New Deal Administration.
46. All these precedents run counter to the claim that the New Deal brought about a 'Roosevelt Revolution'. For Democratic historians, this mythification is very important. F.V. O'Connor himself is such an historian. His interest in New Deal art can partly be attributed to his political involvement with the Democratic Party. He edits a regular bulletin called Federal Art Patronage Notes, published in New York City. The summer 1983

edition was devoted to a transcription of Arthur Schlesinger's remarks on the anniversary of the New Deal, at a conference held in 1982 entitled 'The New Deal And The Arts: Lessons For The 1980s'. O'Connor says 'President Reagan, when a younger and wiser man, cast his first four presidential votes for Roosevelt but alas, he is devoting his old age to dismantling his works...The Federal Art Projects started as a means of relief, a means of preserving artistic skills, of keeping artistic folk alive. It has a larger significance. The WPA administrators saw it as a great opportunity for the arts to become an integral part of people's lives, an organic part of the life of the community...', p.2. O'Connor continues 'I can think of no better way to redeem the grim, totalitarian connotations which cling to the election year 1984, than by working to throw the present rascals out - and induct to power rascals of our own persuasion', p.4.

47. See Since Yesterday: The 1930s In America, p.121.
48. D.K. Adams' Franklin Delano Roosevelt And The New Deal represents this liberal historiography.
49. 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', p.264. Such an interpretation also posits the necessary continuity between Roosevelt's Government and 'the traditions of American revolutionary democracy'. A speech by the Attorney General, speaking before the American Bar Association at Grand Rapids, Michigan in August 1933 demonstrated how the administration presented its own actions: 'There has not been the slightest fundamental departure from the form or nature of our government or the established order...Every new power entrusted to the President has been conferred by the people, acting through their duly elected representatives...The Congress has neither abdicated nor shirked its rights or its duties...What is really happening is not an alteration in the established form or texture of government, but a change in the spirit and application of government...The Constitution is no mere lawyers document, but the whole of the nation's life', quoted in Charles A. Beard and George H.E. Smith The Future Comes: A Study Of The New Deal (MacMillan; New York, 1933), p.156.
50. The Testing Of America, p.148. There is ofcourse the verdict of Keynes himself, who said that Roosevelt was 'like a big fluffy pillow. He bears the imprint of the last person who sat on him', quoted in Franklin Delano Roosevelt And The New Deal, p.24.
51. Quoted in 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', p.276.
52. This was the view taken, for example, by Edgar E. Robinson, in The Roosevelt Leadership 1933-1945. William Randolph Hearst attacked the National Industrial Recovery Act as 'a measure of absolute state socialism' (quoted in Since Yesterday: The 1930s In America, p.162) and a menace to political rights and constitutional liberties. The planning of the Tennessee Valley Authority was slammed by conservatives as 'communism in

- practice' (p.173). The American Liberty League was founded in 1934 to 'battle the New Deal ' and to expose its allegedly dangerous drift toward socialism (The Testing Of America, p.153). Hearst's famous 1936 election verse went 'The Red New Deal With A Soviet Seal/Endorsed By A Moscow Hand/The Strange Result Of An Alien Cult/In A Liberty Loving Land' (p.160).
53. That is, even though the New Deal was not capable of restoring economic production levels to 1929 figures and the Depression was only to end with war production in the early 1940s.
 54. Franklin Delano Roosevelt And The New Deal, p.15.
 55. As Bernstein put it 'In providing [some] assistance to the needy and by rescuing them from starvation, Roosevelt's humane efforts also protected the established system: he sapped organisational radicalism of its waning strength and of its potential constituency among the unorganised and the discontented', 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', p.267.
 56. See his introduction to Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now.
 57. Quoted in Karal A. Marling Wall To Wall America: A Cultural History Of Post-Office Murals In The Great Depression, p.31.
 58. Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.33.
 59. *ibid.*, p.34.
 60. *ibid.*, p.19. After 'eliminating the drones' from the Public Works Of Art Project exhibition, held at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington in April-May 1934, after the Project had ended, Bruce made the claim that the show was 'the greatest art event in this country since the Armoury Show and very much in the same fashion, it will probably be praised by the critics and ridiculed by reporters' (quoted in McKinzie, The New Deal For Artists, p.29).
 61. Clifford Whyte painted three 'realist' panels in the Coit Tower mural project in San Francisco, on the Public Works Of ArtsProject, in 1934. They were entitled 'Rugged Individualism', 'The New Deal' and 'Communism'. During the censorship controversy which followed, when asked why he painted the third panel he said it was 'another alternative which exists in the current American scene'. For an account of the Coit Tower case, see The New Deal For Artists, p.25.
 62. Burgoyne Diller said 'I was very much interested in abstract painting. They felt there was no place for it at the time because they felt the project should be a popular program', quoted in Barbara Rose Readings In American Art Since 1900 (Praeger; New York, 1968), p.117. Isamu Noguchi could not get his designs accepted by either the Public Works Of Art Project New York Office or by Washington. In a letter to Juliana Force, he said 'I am aware that the fault is inherent in the system of minimum dole and regimentation', see Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.33.
 63. Ed Rowan in a letter to Emmanuel Benson, in May 1934

said 'The one restriction which I think was absolutely justified in view of the fact that the artists were working for the American Government, was that they stress in so far as possible, the American Scene', quoted in Federal Support For The Visual Arts: The New Deal And Now, p.20.

64. ibid..
65. A number of Mexican artists had travelled north to apply for work relief on the Public Works Of Art Project.
66. Quoted in Wall-To-Wall America: A Cultural History Of Post-Office Murals In The Great Depression, p.48.
67. The contours of this have yet to be fully delineated and respect paid to the significant differences between the art projects. Ed Rowan, in charge of the Public Works Of Art Project selection procedure said 'any artist who paints a nude on the PWAR should have his head examined' and that anyone who painted 'foreign subjects' had 'better be dropped and an opportunity given to the man and woman with enough imagination and vision to use this beauty and possibility for aesthetic experience in the subject matter of his own country', quoted in The New Deal For Artists, p.223.
68. Quoted in Art For The Millions, p.17, and note 20.
69. Quoted in The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, p.47-8.
70. F.V. O'Connor, in Ruth Bowman Murals Without Walls: Arshile Gorky's Aviation Murals Rediscovered (Newark Museum; Newark, 1978) says 'A major tension in American art which has prevailed from its beginning up to the present day is between large scale easel paintings set in architectural spaces (such as Trombull's, in the Rotunda, in the U.S. Capitol) and murals designed and executed in situ (such as Constantino Brumidi's, in the same building)...With the advent of the New Deal projects in 1933, practical considerations of use, workplace and cost, not to mention the almost universal inexperience of young American artists with the technical problems of in situ mural painting - also resulted in much large scale easel painting being utilised either literally as 'portable murals' in schools and hospitals or installed with varying degrees of arbitrariness in architectural spaces', p.21.
71. This would include, for example, the nineteen century works of John LaForge, William Morris Hunt, as well as such foreigners as Puvis du Chevannes, Edwin Austin Abbey and the ex-patriot John Singer Sargeant.

CHAPTER 2

The Administrative Organisation Of The Federal Art Project: Power, Possession And State-Cultural Populism

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT:
POWER NETWORK, WORK-DISCIPLINE AND CULTURAL PROPERTY

The inception of the Federal Art Project in August 1935 has to be understood in terms of both its structural location within the network of administrative agencies created by the Roosevelt Government for the purpose of providing work for the unemployed, and in terms of the construction of its own particular power hierarchy. Within these both exogenous and endogenous structural relations, the administrative constitution and function of the Federal Art Project rested on its relation to a national and federal structure of effectivity and also to a differentially organised local and state/city operation¹. Within the Federal Works Agency, inaugurated by the Roosevelt Government in 1935, the Federal Art Project was established under the control of the Works Progress Administration, which itself co-existed in a structure of operative agencies which included the Public Building Administration, the Public Roads Administration, the Public Works Administration and the newly-formed United States Housing Authority². The Works Progress Administration, directed by a close ally of Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, instituted a variety of public works schemes which included a set of cultural programmes. These consisted of the Historical Records Survey and the Federal Projects for Music, Theatre, Writers and Art, each of which had their own national director based in Washington D.C. and a stratified network of state and local offices across the nation³. The Federal Art Project federal office

divided the country into forty two units for its administration, sometimes directly corresponding to states, while in other cases including two or more states together, or like the New York City Project, establishing a city as itself an autonomous unit.

From its inauguration in August 1935, and against the claims made that the Roosevelt Administration was a 'proto-socialist' government attempting to implement a state plan of production ⁴, the Works Progress Administration announced:

'The United States Employment Service with which all workers are registered, seeks to keep informed of the needs of private employers and makes constant effort to place WPA workers in private jobs...' 5

Although this may have been officially-stated federal Works Progress Administration policy, cumulative administrative and political conflict over this issue of the extent and efficacy of the State's expansion of employment generally - as well as in particular relation to State cultural production - was to become one of the leit motif struggles waged by both administrators and employees in the Federal Art Project over the next five years. It became a central question within the debates that developed over whether the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal should be properly understood as either a limited reforming of a monopoly capitalist system in crisis or as the implementation of a 'transitional programme' designed to engineer the transformation of the United States into a socialist society. Within the Federal Art Project in particular, the conflicting positions held by artists and

administrators - differentially located within the various programmes - over the nature and purpose of the New Deal, were to develop into salient antagonism during the late 1930s. Such political strife was to fuel the growth of attacks by the Press and the Republican Party on both the Federal Art Project and the Roosevelt Administration generally ⁶. Equally important for both political and administrative reasons, was the question of the Works Progress Administration's federal power structure and the nature of its decentralised operations across the nation ⁷. The Works Progress Administration's federal office was committed to a policy of devolving decision-making to local state and city-based power structures, in order to allow what was called 'sensitivity to local pressures' ⁸. The granting of such autonomy also, inevitably, allowed the possibility of the local subversion of the federal guidelines established in Washington. In an early Works Progress Administration report, it was stated that:

'The WPA is ruled not by a federal bureaucracy but by a local oligarchy. Its shortcomings, dramatised by the advocates of complete local control are due to an already excessive degree of local control' ⁹

As the example of the Federal Art Project generally, and the Index Of American Design programme in particular will show, the tensions between such a national and federal policy formation and its local/state implementation, indexed a variety of political responses to the Roosevelt Administration in general. These ranged from almost unqualified support for the Democrats and for the activities

of the Federal Art Project, to a hostile political opposition manifested through the local administrative obfuscation of intermediate State functionaries. The case of one of these, the Federal Art Project administrator in Philadelphia, will be discussed shortly.

The Federal Art Project's internal power hierarchy consisted of five distinct tiers, pyramidal in design and at the apex of which was located the national director, Holger Cahill, situated in Washington. Directly below his office was what was known as the 'Field Advisor' section, a group of Washington-appointed officials whose function was to act for Cahill in all matters when monitoring the Project's activities around the country. Not attached to any specific region, they were to 'free-range nationwide' ¹⁰. Their role was that of directing and checking the local administration of national guidelines and advising the next subordinate tier of decision-makers, that of the 'Regional and State Art Directors'. It was the task of this level of Project management to appoint and order the ground level administration and day-to-day operation of the Project, through their local appointment of 'District Art Supervisors' and their 'Local Advisory Committees'. Through this structure of power and effectivity, the Federal Art Project expected:

'every effort to be made...to carry out a unified program' ¹¹

The construction of this 'unity', was to consist, in part, of allowing the representation of a plurality of local opinions within the decision-making process: the Local Advisory Committee would constitute a 'catholicity of taste' ¹².

Yet this attempt to allow the 'equal' representation of diverse local interests across the body of the country, did not prevent the Project's federal office from attempting to marshal and control the formal etiquette of Project administration and the observance of a set of national guidelines. A memorandum from 1936 pointed out that the decision as to whether a local project was 'performing a valuable function' and 'as to whether it should continue', rested entirely with the federal director ¹³ . Even more firmly was it stated that:

'the decision as to which work of art is to be painted, or played or acted, lies entirely with the Federal Director of his representative" ¹⁴

The determination of the extent of federal control of national projects within the Works Progress Administration was legislated at the level of the Works Progress Administration itself, and seemingly could not be arbitrated by the sub-projects, such as the Federal Art Project, within it. This was particularly important in the determination of general work relief administration policy. In terms of the local/state administration of work-relief, Harry Hopkins believed the federal government had to rely on co-operation rather than coercion to maintain the support for a programme ¹⁵ . Yet at the same time, Hopkins stated, the construction of administrative uniformity depended on 'some degree of federal supervision and control' ¹⁶ . In relation to the Federal Art Project, the question of this 'uniformity' of administration was intimately linked to the State's capacity to legitimise its subvention of cultural production. Centrally, this

involved the State's function in producing and reproducing artists, writers, musicians and actors as valid 'workers' and as valid 'citizens' of the National-Popular. The uniform administration of work relief schemes became a directly political problem, in an America where the perceived 'worthwhileness' of public work schemes in general was disputed ¹⁷. Hopkins said that while it was 'readily understood' ¹⁸ that the building of roads and schools was worthwhile:

'it was often not so readily understood that music, recreation and theatre were worthwhile' ¹⁹

Pivotal to the criteria operative in deciding upon the 'worthwhileness' of the State's intervention into cultural production was the capacity of the administration to articulate such cultural activity as productive labour. This was the necessary precondition for the next step of assimilating a specific form of cultural labour into the State's managerial understanding of general productive labour and its valorization ²⁰. A question such as 'what or who is an artist?' thus attained a bureaucratic urgency and the necessity of an administrative judgement. This problem of eligibility concerned the subjective evaluation required, because the employment division of the Federal Art Project had to:

'refer all relief personnel registered as artists, art teachers or craftsmen in the arts to the person or committee authorised to pass on the qualification of artist' ²¹

As the Federal Art Project operating manual, written by Holger Cahill himself, made clear, the employment of cultural producers was organised and stratified according

to a tacit evaluation of 'practical skills', despite the stipulation that atleast 90% of Project personnel should be drawn from the relief rolls and not employed because of 'evident' artistic ability ²² . The four classifications used consisted of the following divisions. (A) Professional and Technical: according to Cahill, these were those 'experienced in their skill and who are capable of producing creative work of a high standard of excellence' ²³ . Their role was also to supervise the activities of the lower grades. The (B) Skilled category artists should be able to produce work of 'recognisable merit' ²⁴ , but not of a quality equivalent to that of the above classification. (C) Intermediate graded workers were even less skilled and experienced, and should need constant supervision and guidance. The (D) Unskilled classification of workers were not to be employed at all in the actual production of works of art; rather they were to fulfil ancillary functions such as that of 'gallery attendants, handymen, messengers, office boys' ²⁵ .

According to a Federal Art Project report, the government economist and statistician Sol Ozer was given the job of 'sufficiently rationalizing' the production of Federal Art Project workers, in order that they conformed with general government work relief practice ²⁶ . This task involved the attempt to relate and, to a degree, assimilate the residual mode of production of paintings, sculpture and prints into the dominant modern industrial mass-production labour process ²⁷ . Ozer wrote, with Cahill, a work regulation bulletin which became the normative document for the Project's administration of

cultural labour. According to the economist, the problem was that of taking:

'individualised types of activities employing people who in most cases have never had to submit to the controls of mass production or the manual disciplines of industry and whose standards of performance it was difficult to put down on paper and...fit...into the main employment pattern of the WPA' 28

It was recommended that artists employed on the Federal Art Project work ninety six hours per month, but that it was not necessary - in fact it was considered 'unreliable' and 'interfering' ²⁹ - for the artists to leave their chosen work place to make formal appearances in front of time-keepers. So, despite the attempts to rationalise the production of federal artists, Cahill succeeded in procuring the official recognition of their productive labour as different in nature from the other forms of labour being managed and mobilised by the State through its work agencies. This should be seen to represent a State-administrative and conceptual negotiation of cultural production as a labour process. As a result, it left partially intact some important normative assumptions about the necessary conditions and relations of authentic artistic production ³⁰. While the production of art was officially recognised in this sense as differentially 'creative' in comparison to other forms of work and which therefore required a different form of regulation, the State was to be firm about its ownership rights and its deep involvement in the evolution of the production of the works of art as objects of administrative control. Stanton MacDonald Wright, the regional director of the

Federal Art Project in Southern California, complained about the attempt to rule that all project preparatory work had to be sent to Washington for prior approval.

He wrote to Cahill:

'You know darn well that the submitting of every sketch of sculpture, petrachrome, mosaic, etc, to Washington would indefinitely delay the entire project...Is this regulation perfunctory, academic, institutional or just plain downright hooey?' 31

In fact, the regulation of the production of art works on the Federal Art Project depended largely on the involvement and surveillance-function of what were called 'co-operating sponsors', who would commission a federal artist and place the finished work in a 'public or quasi-public institution' 32. Before the work was begun the plans and sketches had to receive complete approval from the Project's own review board as well as from the co-operating sponsor. The involvement of such local bodies, which ranged from municipal art commissions to Health Authorities and to 'extra-State' organisations such as the American Legion or the Daughters Of The American Revolution, was to directly impress the sense of the WorksxProgress Administration's local control and accountability and to counter the attacks on the New Deal as a constraining federalism undermining state and local democracy 33. However, despite the final destination of the commissioned federal art object, it was to remain forever the legal property of the federal State, on 'permanent loan' and not to be sold 34. This rule similarly applied to the exhibition of federal art in commercial galleries: 'the exhibits are the property of the federal Government...and they [must be] marked...none of it is for

sale' ³⁵ . Again, however, local project administration could and did reject or alter the actual implementation of federal policy guidelines. In New York City, Colonel Brehon Somervelle's office at the Works Progress Administration, attempted to prohibit artists from signing their own works of art or posters advertising Federal Art Project activities ³⁶ . The photographer Berenice Abbott complained that the photographs for her book Changing New York were published by the Project before she had approved them ³⁷ . Such cases, and many others, demonstrated the fact that the Federal Art Project as both a national entity and as a set of diverse local programmes and administrations had to negotiate a variety of responses to its existence from personnel within its own power network ³⁸ . These ranged from the viewpoint that the Project had not gone far enough in socialising cultural production and extracting it from the relations of private patronage (the stance of the Artists' Union, the American Artists' Congress, for example ³⁹) to the attempts of some powerful intermediate State functionaries to restore this private patronage de facto on the Project and along with it the evaluative criteria associated with those relations of production and consumption. Such an administrator was Mary Curran, in charge of the Federal Art Project in Philadelphia. According to a range of testimonies by both artists and supervisors, she refused to allow the allocation of commissioned works to public institutions and attempted to isolate and sack known left-wing artists, as well as ardent 'New Dealers'. An attack on her activities was published entitled

Philadelphia's Shame: An Analysis Of The UnAmerican
Administration Of The Federal Art Project In Philadelphia ⁴⁰.

In particular, Curran attempted to prevent the allocation of murals to the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania ⁴¹. Although rebuked on several occasions by federal administrators in Washington, she seems to have survived in charge of the Project in Philadelphia ⁴². Curran, in a report of her own, stressed administrative goals patently at odds with the Project's declared relief status: she required a 'professional standard of output' and she regarded that it could not be 'too highly stressed that the relief requirement has prevented the Art Project achieving its highest usefulness' ⁴³.

In August 1936, C. Adolph Glassgold, a federal field advisor from Washington, visited Curran in Philadelphia and reported back to Cahill on what he called her 'hysteria' ⁴⁴. His account of her administrative activities centred on what he called her basic opposition to the official philosophy behind the Federal Art Project:

'Even more to be criticized is her opposition to the basic principle underlying the Art Project: the belief in art as a public commodity. She still clings fervently to the pre-war concept of the sacredness of the artist, his dedication to a small, exclusive, specially-trained cognescenti, speaks with ardour of "those sensitive Harvard men" and addresses herself to the task of placing Federal Art Project work in the museums' ⁴⁵

As we shall see, it is these questions - concerned with: the intervention of the Federal Art Project into the contemporary relations of cultural patronage; with the attempt by the Federal Art Project to transform the meaning of the subject-position 'artist' and with Modernism's

esotericism and institutional basis - which recur as sites of struggle within the Federal Art Project discourse and in wider discussions of the nature of contemporary culture in America. These problems constituted key components within the discourses which attempted to both legitimise and delègitimise the economic and social support of artists as workers by the New Deal State.

FEDERAL ARTISTS, FEDERAL ART AND ROOSEVELTIAN POPULISM

The Federal Art Project's central object of popularising the production and consumption of art - what could be described as an 'aesthetic populism' in a relation of symmetry with the political and social populism of Roosevelt's New Deal - was represented continually in the statements of both federal officials, local administrators and project artists. The Federal Art Project anthology entitled Art For The Millions, which contains dozens of instantiations of this populism, was the Federal Art Project's most concerted effort to represent to the nation the democratic progressivism which underpinned the organisation of the Project ⁴⁶. According to Girolamo Piccoli, director of the Federal Art Project sculpture programme in New York City, sculpture had 'traditionally been a mass art' ⁴⁷. It was only in the epoch of industrial and then monopoly-capitalism that it had become 'an unknown art' because only the very rich could afford to patronize its production. With the coming of the Federal Art Project, however, sculpture as a

National-State and public possession 'as far as the American people are concerned' had once again become a real possibility ⁴⁸ .

Support from those outside the administration of the Federal Art Project was not slow in coming and mirrored the official Federal Art Project emphasis that an 'American cultural Renaissance' was taking place, essentially concerned with democratising the experience and production of a genuinely 'popular' American culture. According to Lewis Mumford:

'These projects have given the artist a home; and they have planted the seeds of the fine arts, hitherto raised under glass in a few metropolitan hothouses, in every village and byway in the country, enovating soils that have become sour with neglect and opening up ⁴⁹ new area for cultivation'

In a similar vein, and demonstrating a strand of continuity with the social philosophy of the so-called Southern Agrarians ⁵⁰ , the art critic E.M. Benson proclaimed that the American artist, hitherto a resident of the 'suburbs of Paris, Munich and Majorca' ⁵¹ had finally returned home to contemple afresh and represent The American Scene. Benson's argument is exemplary of the leftism of certain contemporary cultural critics allied with the Democratic Party and the New Deal. According to Benson, the 'democratic culture of America', constructed as the tradition of Earl, Copley, Brady, Jefferson, Lincoln, Altgeld, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, had been thwarted by that 'brassy and boisterous Gargantuan Child, finance capitalism' ⁵² . With the resulting Crash and Depression and the inauguration of the New Deal and the Federal Art

Project, the path back to a truly democratic culture and society was made open. As Dorothy Grafly argued in the American Magazine Of Art ⁵³, Elizabeth McCausland in the Printer ⁵⁴ and Gustav von Groschwitz and Lincoln Rothschild on the Graphic Section of the Federal Art Project, the medium of print-making in particular was central to the development of this expansive democracy. Its efficacy consisted in both its status as an inherently 'mass-production' communication system, infinitely reproducible and denying the unique image/object, and because its subject matter was supposedly intrinsically popular. According to Grafly:

'the American artists of today find design material in daily life scorned less than a decade ago by dealer-made, collector-nurtured print-makers...All phases of American life are being tapped. Rush Hour by Fritz Eichenberg invades the cafeteria' ⁵⁵

Elizabeth McCausland argued that the development of the technology of the medium of print was substantial with the beginnings of the American nation - 'a genuine folk art of prints, an authentic art of the common man' ⁵⁶. As far as she was concerned, prints and photography had the saving characteristic that their 'popular qualities' prevented them being identified and appropriated as 'high art' ⁵⁷. The Federal Art Project's Graphic Section was thus bound to influence and effect the extension of democracy in America. According to von Groschwitz, in a letter to Lincoln Rothschild, the section should co-ordinate its activities directly with other projects operating in the New Deal, in order to co-operate with a 'much broader social vision' ⁵⁸. He gave the examples of power/light (perhaps

thinking of the Tennessee Valley Authority), transportation, mining and metallurgy. Such a general and integrated mobilisation of cultural producers would serve to satisfy the 'demand of the general public' ⁵⁹ that 'cultural expression' must fit into 'the necessary practical pattern of their lives' ⁶⁰ .

This conception of the 'practical life' of the American people, articulated also what became a contemporary Federal Art Project doxa defining the authenticity of American culture. The metaphors of 'materiality' and 'cultivation' permeate nearly all affirmative discussion of the value of the activities of the Project. The Project was said to be 'taking art to the country' ⁶¹ , where it would 'produce homegrown artists' ⁶² , so that a 'crop would stand comparison with the best that other countries have achieved' ⁶³ . Similarly, while the margins of the body of the country - and especially New York City - were regarded as temporally and culturally peripheral because they were socially heterogeneous and ethnically European-looking, Constance Rourke argued that ~~ix~~ 'America' was to have an 'art of its own', it must 'spring from the center rather than the periphery of our social pattern' ⁶⁴ . Any authentically American culture would not try to 'catch up with Europe' because this would precisely hinder the recognition and development of what was essentially American ⁶⁵ .

What was regarded as 'essentially American' became a Federal Art Project terminological equivalent for a particular concept of a philosophic and aesthetic realism.

Democracy, 'practical life' and a 'realist' perspective were to be discursively counterposed to an 'UnAmerican', 'intellectualist' and 'abstract' concern with form at the expense of substance. According to Aline Kistler, writing in The American Magazine Of Art at the beginning of the Federal Art Project, Americans had always been essentially realist at heart and realism was a 'common denominator of the American viewpoint' ⁶⁶. Similarly, Donald J. Bear argued, in pointing to the Federal Art Project, that the eclecticism of 'the terrible chimera of the "isms"' ⁶⁷ had hopefully ended and a new tradition, based upon nature and and 'a strangely different set of values' ⁶⁸ had begun ⁶⁸. The Federal Art Project, according to Elizabeth McCausland, in another article in Printer was 'making history' and the:

'work already done on the Federal Art Project shows fairly definitely that he will not apply it by turning back to Lautrec for a style. Indeed the present day trend towards realism has already expressed itself both in the subjects chosen and in the manner in which ⁶⁹ they have been developed'

Following on from this, the realist representational mode - diverse as it was and by no means limited to Federal Art Project artists - was articulated by the Project and by Holger Cahill himself as necessarily related to the artist's conception of his or her social role in American society ⁷⁰. This meant the rejection of the figure of the isolated and suffering individualist Modernist artist and his or her absorption into what Cahill referred to as the American people's 'genius for teamwork' ⁷¹.

This thesis shall argue that the Federal Art Project attempted to produce a radical transformation of the artist's

conception of his or her own subject-position in American society, and a similar transformation, in the minds of the American people, of what artists were and why they produced ⁷² . As the following three chapters will show, the State, through the Federal Art Project, articulated the 'artist' as 'citizen' and as 'legitimate worker', situated in a position of discursive equivalence with other legitimised subject-positions to be occupied by subjects within Roosevelt's New Deal America. The State, within this America, was to operate as the decisive 'factor of cohesion', articulating the stratified social composition of the field of subjects as 'citizenry' and as People: unified, mobilised and productive in the interests of the Nation as defined and reproduced by Roosevelt and the New Deal State ⁷³ .

Within this discourse, artists were to be appropriated for and by the 'National-Popular'. According to one Federal Art Project report:

'The employment by the Federal Government of artists to make prints is not only a new development in the history of American art, but embraces as well a changed point of view on the part of the artist. The artist has become conscious of his place in a shifting troubled world and is responsive to the world about him' ⁷⁴

Before the Federal Art Project, Mary Morsell from the Exhibition Division argued that the artist 'as an individual was forced by circumstances into a false relationship with society' ⁷⁵ : it was only the 'true regionalism' and 'healthy community contacts' engendered by the Project which had allowed the artist to develop properly ⁷⁶ .

And what was true of the artist was now also true of the art-going public - reconstructed as the 'art-going people' ⁷⁷ . No longer a specialised group of the cognescenti, a Federal Art Project official argued, the art gallery now belonged to the ordinary people ⁷⁸ . The aesthetes were now 'lost among the men, women and yes, even children, who stream into the galleries' ⁷⁹ . This Project populism is exemplified in a triumphant account of how a bourgeois institutional space has apparently been usurped and transformed:

'The man in the street, his wife, and their children, whose appearance in the world of art had once been more ephemeral than even the merchant princes and stock market barons, now provide tangible evidence of their realistic interest in art. It is these people - and they need no identifying labels to distinguish them as a class - from all walks of life and all strata of society, who now throng to exhibitions, art classes, lectures' 80

Here is represented the State's paradigmatic prescription for the nature of the American citizenry: bonded into legitimate familial, economic and juridical relations, an articulated field of subjects differentially located within the social structure but without class, gender or race antagonism within the discourse and practices of the New Deal Nation-State.

'NEW HORIZONS' AND THE NEW DEAL

In 1936 the Federal Art Project organised an exhibition in co-operation with the Museum Of Modern Art in New York, called 'New Horizons In American Art'. It was to be the Project's first major attempt to represent to the American

people the achievements and value of the Project. The Project staff, both in Washington and in local regions, was highly aware of its publicity requirements and the necessity of its capacity for self-advertisement. Cahill wrote to Charlotte Partridge, the Project Regional Director in Wisconsin, in July 1936:

'It is of the utmost importance to make this exhibition an effective demonstration of the greatest accomplishments of the Federal Art Project and your co-operation is solicited in making this demonstration a significant event in the National picture...make this exhibition a truly national demonstration' 81

Attempts were made, successfully, to arrange for Mrs. Roosevelt to open the show and to thus represent Presidential backing for the Project's activities. Although it proved impossible for the President himself to attend, Cahill asked for him to send a message of support for the Government art project, adding that, if necessary, Cahill would gladly write the message himself 82 . According to Sarah Neumeyer, on the staff of the Museum Of Modern Art, Paramount Pictures took a newsreel of the exhibition opening in the summer of 1936 and she hoped it wouldn't be squeezed out of cinema showings because of the clash with the 1936 Presidential election campaign 83 .

The exhibition, containing Federal Art Project work from the mural, easel painting, graphic arts, sculpture, allied arts and children's work divisions, consisted of a total of 435 items produced by 172 project workers from all sections of the country. The press response was generally favourable towards the exhibition and the Federal Art Project's activities 84 . The Nation, in a review en-

titled 'Towards An American Art' said that one might get the feeling that the depression of 1929 might prove to be the best thing that ever happened to American art ⁸⁵ . The Times Herald, of Dallas, said that America was 'finding herself' ⁸⁶ , while the Brooklyn Eagle argued that the Whitney Museum would have to yield to the Federal Government for having the 'blue ribband...[and] having the foremost collection in the country of contemporary art' ⁸⁷ . The Washington Daily News signalled that 'Native Painting Turns To Vigorous Expression' ⁸⁸ , while Art Front, the paper of the Artists' Union, said the exhibition could be dismissed by neither 'cynical reactionaries or by precious intellectuals' ⁸⁹ . In alliance against European Modernism, the Sun (Baltimore?) claimed that the show took on the air 'of a popular uprising against the inherent snobbishness of the cult of a precious art for the initiated few' ⁹⁰ . The New York World Telegram called it 'the biggest event of the whole year' ⁹¹ , despite the proviso that there were 'few masterpieces' on show ⁹² . F.A. Whiting Jr., writing in the American Magazine Of Art said that after the 'New Horizons In American Art' show and the 1934 Corcoran Exhibition of Public Works Of Art Project items in Washington, the critical observers of the Government art schemes must see the value of the employment of artists by the State ⁹³ .

This vigorous and affirmative support for the show and for the Federal Art Project's existence within the Works Progress Administration, should also be seen as part of the zenith of popular and corporate support for Roosevelt in 1936, his re-election year. This contrasts

sharply with the Congressional and corporate attacks on the New Deal and the Federal Art Project which began to mount from 1937 onwards ⁹⁴ .

At this conjuncture, in 1936, a year into the Federal Art Project, when Roosevelt's political support was at its highest and his agencies and administrations were seemingly involved in a successful rescue of American monopoly capitalism from terminal crisis and at the same time putatively offering real political power to the 'common people', attacks on the Project would have seemed to be attacks on the social and cultural imagination of the New Deal and on the discourses arguing for the extension and deepening of democratic institutions and processes in the United States. However, this attack was not long in coming.

Before its Congressional cancellation in 1940, the Works Progress Administration organised a radio broadcast called 'See-For-Yourself Week'. Helen Gahagan from the National Community Service Advisory Committee articulated the Rooseveltian populism which had characterised the five years of the Administration:

'You, patriotic and enlightened citizens in communities all over this country, you, our sponsors, have worked with us to make our programme possible. We are partners in our great humanitarian and economic venture - the greatest perhaps, that the citizens of this Democracy have ever embarked upon together. You have helped make it possible for millions of people to go on working, to continue to be citizens useful to their communities...the women who cook and serve school lunches, the nurses, the technicians, the clerical workers, the skilled craftsmen who work in museums and universities, the teachers, the librarians, the legal, economic, engineering and social students who make our

surveys, the household service workers, the helpers in medical clinics - to the artists who paint pictures and murals, to the musicians in our hundreds of orchestras, to the writers and all our other workers...' 95

As the following chapters show, the Federal Art Project's prominent and strategic discourses articulated the people as 'citizen-subjects' within the body of a reformed capitalist Nation-state and made artists - reconstituted as 'citizen-workers' - both the object and the vehicle of such a representation.

Notes To Chapter 2

1. As the following chapters will demonstrate, this distinction between a national programme and local or city-based operations led to the development of quite diverse sorts of Project activities. This heterogeneity is exemplified by the difference in organisation, planning and administration of, on the one hand, the Index Of American Design (see Chapter 5) and, on the other, the New York City Mural Programme (see Chapter 4).
2. For a lengthy discussion of the administration of the art projects, see William F. McDonald Federal Relief Administration And The Arts: Three Origins And Administrative History Of The Arts Projects Of The Works Progress Administration (Ohio State University Press; Columbus, 1969).
3. The federal directors of the cultural projects were: Holger Cahill (Federal Art Project); Nikolai Sokoloff (Federal Music Project); Hallie Flanagan (Federal Theatre Project) and Henry Alsberg (Federal Writers' Project). It should be remembered that the cultural projects represented only a very small part of the Works Progress Administration. As a federal document entitled Questions And Answers On The WPA pointed out: '95% of WPA expenditure are for projects planned by such local sponsors as city councils, county commissioners and boards of education or state agencies...WPA works: 37% highways, roads and streets; 11% parks, playgrounds; 11% education; 10% sewerage and canning projects [sic]; 2% sanitation; 9% construction; 4½% conservation; 2½% municipal airports; 2% federal art projects; 1½% various others'. The average WPA wage, according to this document, was 52.50 dollars per month, with an average 110 hours work per month. Of every WPA dollar spent, the report said, 86c went on wages; 11c on materials and 3c on administration. FAP/DC54/AAA.
4. This claim and the arguments made against it are discussed later in the thesis.
5. In Questions And Answers On The WPA.
6. This is evident in the position of most of the artists' organisations (eg the Artists' Union, the American Artists' Congress and Art Front paper), who considered the Federal Art Project to be the first step in the socialisation of the production of art in America. Conflict between these organisations and the State administration (both the Works Progress Administration and that of the Federal Art Project) developed through the mid and late 1930s as Congress cut back on financial support for the projects and began to sack project employees. See Chapter 7.
7. The de facto termination of the Federal Art Project as a national operation, with a unified policy-formation in Washington, occurred from late 1939 onwards, and was consubstantial with the termination of the Works Progress Administration and its re-organisation as the Work Projects Administration.
8. From a document entitled Home Rule In The WPA. FAP/DC54/AAA.
9. *ibid.*

10. From the document Federal Art Project Manual (October 1935), found in the Museum Of Modern Art library, New York.
11. *ibid.*
12. *ibid.*
13. Memo to Regional Directors. FAP/DC 54/AAA. Following
14. Poulantzas, it should be said that the pre-condition for the State apparatuses constituting the 'factor of cohesion' within the social formation is the constitution of the unity of the apparatuses themselves. This unity was to be forged through the national articulation of State policy, administration and functions within the Works Progress Administration and within the Federal Art Project. For a discussion of this, see Poulantzas State, Power, Socialism 'The State Personnel', pp.154-160.
14. *ibid.* The memo continued 'No member of the state WPA or of the regional staff has any right to stop a play, to require changes in a mural, to determine what should go into a local guidebook, etc... and the representatives of the Federal directors have no authority to vary established financial procedure'.
15. From an untitled document. FAP/DC 54/AAA.
16. *ibid.* But it continued 'a federal program, if it is to evoke local initiative and local responsibility, can not be bureaucratically managed by our federal government in Washington'.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.* For a discussion of the attitude of working class people to work relief programmes in America in the mid 1930s, see Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd Middletown In Transition (Harvest; New York, 1965), chapter iv 'Caring For The Unable During The Depression: Bench Marks For Social Change'.
19. *ibid.*
20. For a full discussion of cultural activity as productive labour, see Raymond Williams Marxism And Literature. In particular 'Base And Superstructure' (pp.75-82) and 'Productive Forces' (pp.90-94). Also see Janet Wolff The Social Production Of Art (Mac Millan; London, 1982), chapter 2. While industrial capitalist wage-labour in twentieth century American society (centralised means of production, Taylorist 'speed-up' practices; private ownership and control of fixed and variable capital; the workers' sale of labour power, etc) obviously constituted a large fraction of economic production, the concept of a 'general productive labour' should also include the administerial homogenisation of a heterogeneity of work practices which could include a State-ratified 'cultural labour'.
21. Federal Art Project Manual. As will be seen, the conflict over the understanding of the Project as primarily a relief operation for the unemployed or as a vehicle for State embellishment is central to the developing discourses on the Project and its legitimation.
22. The proportion of those employed as skilled workers supervising less able workers was to increase up to

- 25% in 1936. Dorothy C. Miller in The U.S. Government Art Projects: A Brief Summary (excerpts from Colliers Yearbook, no date) says that at the beginning of the Project almost three million dollars had been set aside for six months use. By the end of the year, the Project had employed 3975 artists on 312 separate projects.
23. Federal Art Project Manual.
 24. This system may be said to have some similarity with the guild-apprentice mode of production and work-training. This would re-emphasise the understanding of the Federal Art Project as committed to the collective organisation of artists in opposition to a bourgeois individualist account of artistic production.
 25. The phrase 'actual production of works of art' is here meant descriptively rather than conceptually. Theoretically, the labour of the 'D' category workers was necessary for the reproduction of the Project and its artists.
 26. In DCM/1105/AAA.
 27. See note 20.
 28. In DCM/1105/AAA.
 29. Federal Art Project Manual.
 30. While Project artists became State wage-labourers, in a contractual relation with the Project administration, they retained the right to work in their own studios and to choose when to work the regulation number of hours. Obviously this was differentially determined by the precise nature of their productive forces: while easel painters could work away from Project supervision, mural artists or sculptors might have to work in situ. In terms of graphic artists, it may be correct to speak of relatively centralised/concentrated means of production necessitating the regular appearance of workers on State labour sites.
 31. Stanton MacDonald Wright to T.C. Parker, Federal Art Project assistant director, August 8th 1939. FAP/DC54/AAA.
 32. Federal Art Project Manual. It continued 'Projects may also be undertaken with the co-operating sponsorship of private organisations who wish to aid the government with money or services providing that the works produced under the project remain the property of some public agency'.
 33. The question of the political affiliation of such 'extra-State' sponsors contains both empirical and theoretical facets. While I came across no case of an obviously alternative organisation (e.g. trade union) or oppositional organisation (e.g. American Communist Party) operating as a 'co-operating sponsor', it remains to be seen whether this ever happened. Theoretically, we should be aware of Althusser's claim that the existence of the 'extra-State' apparatus is in itself the product of the State's construction of the division 'public'/'private'. See Lenin And Philosophy And Other Essays, p.144.
 34. Federal Art Project Manual. The costed items were as

- follows: easel (framed) 20" x 30" oil: 10 dollars; easel (framed) oil portrait: thirty five dollars; print (matt) 16" x 19": two dollars 50c; cast stone sculpture: two dollars 50c per cubic feet; oil mural 100' sq.: one hundred dollars.
35. Cahill to Audrey McMahon, May 20th 1936. FVOC/1085/AAA.
 36. Mentioned in a letter from T.C. Parker to Lawrence Morris, October 29th 1936. FVOC/1085/AAA. Parker was against Somerville's attempts: 'I regret to say that I wholeheartedly approve of all [artists'] protests and feel that it is necessary that some action be taken by the Federal Division in calling the attention of Colonel Somerville's office to the fact that the artists have well-founded protests against the policy which they have adopted'.
 37. Mentioned in a letter from T.C. Parker to Somerville. FVOC/1105/AAA.
 38. This power network must be understood, as Poulantzas argued, in terms of its particular (State apparatus) condensation of the social relations of production and the division of labour in capitalist society. We may characterise this condensation within the Federal Art Project as consisting of a three-fold split between the federal/national managerial bureaucracy (concerned with policy formation), a strata of intermediate state/local managerial-bureaucracies (concerned with policy interpretation and implementation) and the 'under-strata' of workers employed as cultural producers on specific projects. This may tentatively be considered analogous with Poulantzas' distinction between 'intellectual' and 'manual' labour. Further, we must accept, again as Poulantzas argued, the condensation of political conflict within the State apparatus, to be understood as the existence of 'popular struggles' within the State, manifest in the State personnel (a category which includes the tripartite division mentioned above). See State, Power, Socialism, 'The State And Popular Struggles', pp.140-145.
 39. The difference between 'socialisation' and 'statization' should be recognised here. Poulantzas believed that 'statization' or 'nationalisation' are characteristic forms of State Capitalism. He says in particular '...statized capital continues to exploit (public enterprises exploit their workers) and thus to produce surplus-value; indeed through being devalourised, it permits the transfer of surplus-value to other sectors of capital', State, Power, Socialism 'On The Economic Functions Of The State', p.175. This seems a particularly accurate description of the function of the New Deal State interventions, which were not designed to replace private capital but to supplement and to restore its ultimate profitability. Such intervention Poulantzas calls the 'expanded role of the State in the reproduction of the relations of capitalism'. A minimum definition of true 'socialisation' of production, according to Poulantzas, would have to include the transformation of the social division of labour in capitalist society. It is the

absence of this transformation in Eastern European 'socialist' societies which leads Poulantzas to conclude that there remains elements of 'capitalist social relations' in these countries' modes of production.

40. The artist Isadore Possoff wrote to Cahill 'My contact with scores of artists on projects under Miss Curran's supervision has revealed the fact that they are unable to express themselves...to the best of their ability because of interference'. In Philadelphia's Shame: An Analysis Of The Un-American Administration Of The Federal Art Project In Philadelphia, Henry Hart (The Friends Of Art & Education; Philadelphia, no date).
41. Curran was antagonistic to the concept of the fixed mural painting. Herbert D. Allman, President of the National Farm School wrote to Cahill on June 4th 1937, on the subject of the murals commissioned for the main dining room 'It was reported to me', he said, 'that the Regional Director of the Federal Art Project, Mary Curran, did not favour such a project, stating that she had hundreds of such requests and that a picture is just as good, if not better, because it can be moved...', FAP/DC54/AAA. Murals signified, above all, the celebrated return of the 'social function' of Art and the disposition of the easel painting that of the end of the bourgeois-individualist artist.
42. She received letters of admonition from T.C. Parker. FAP/DC54/AAA.
43. Mary Curran's report on the Federal Art Project in Philadelphia, from October - July 1935-1938. She continued: 'If a man is to be judged by what he has added to civilisation, the value of such an endeavour as a government project in the fine arts may also be measured by the quality of the works of art which it produced...' FAP/DC54/AAA.
44. Field Report by C. Adolph Glassgold, Thursday August 27th 1936. FAP/DC54/AAA.
45. *ibid.* He continued 'Her resistance to the values of allocating works to educational and other less specialised institutions almost borders on an obsession.'
46. The history of this anthology is bound up with the history of the Federal Art Project in the late 1930s. Emmanuel Benson was engaged to edit this collection of short essays which he solicited from project artists and administrators. Early in 1937 plans were made for the U.S. Government Printing Office to publish it. This didn't happen. By December 1937 Benson was actively seeking a private publisher and was negotiating with Random House. The accounts of this are silent until March 1939 when they show that Albert Whitman and Co. of Chicago agreed to publish the book. The anthology never appeared. In September 1939 the Federal Art Project and the entire Works Progress Administration was radically reorganised. The Federal Art Project was placed under state or local control. When the newly-named Work Projects Administration

- was liquidated in 1943, the publication was lost. It was rediscovered and published by F.V. O'Connor in 1973.
47. Report To The Sculptors Of The Federal Art Project. NDA/15/AAA.
 48. *ibid.*.. This type of criticism of monopoly capitalism permeates many of the articles in Art For The Millions. This should be rightly understood as the expression of a variety of class-fractured opinions. For a theoretical discussion of the presence of conflict within the dominant power bloc condensed in the State, see State, Power, Socialism 'The State And The Dominant Classes', pp.127-139.
 49. Lewis Mumford 'A Letter To The President', New Republic, December 30th 1936. It continued 'When pianos were first shipped into the frontier towns of the West, Emerson hailed the enterprise: "the more pianos", he observed, "the less wolf".'
 50. See Daniel Aaron Writers On The Left (Oxford University Press, 1977), p.249. 'A group of Southern writers centred in Vanderbilt University, who with other Southern intellectuals published a manifesto "I'll Take My Stand" (1930), an argument and an outline for an 'agrarian' and regional society modelled on the culture of the antebellum South'.
 51. From a lecture entitled 'Trends In American Art' (no date). HC/1108/AAA.
 52. *ibid.*.. In an article entitled 'WPA Not "Terrible Things" On Walls Of City Buildings, But GOOD WORK, Experts Says', in the Herald Tribune (New York), Sunday March 15th 1936, a writer said 'women who think it smart to sit around tea and cocktail tables and sigh over what "terrible things" they hear are being perpetrated in public buildings in the name of art, might well summon up their chauffeurs and take a look'.
 53. Dorothy Graffy 'The Print: America's Folk Art', in American Magazine Of Art January 1938; vol.xxxi, no.1.
 54. Elizabeth McCausland 'Lithographs To The Fore', in Printer October 1936; vol.vii, no.1.
 55. 'The Print: America's Folk Art'. She continued 'The print came of its own in America where it is developing a people's art, smacking lustily of the soil and of those who till or dispoil it...It is an art that goes into the streets, the factories, the cities, the farms, that ranges the prairies where at dusk cattle seek a waterhole as in Peter Hurd's print The Water Hole; that penetrate the ghost towns of miners to emerge with Coal Town by Harry Sternberg...'
 56. 'Lithographs To The Fore'.
 57. *ibid.*..
 58. von Groschwitz to Rothschild, February 3rd 1938. NDA/15/AAA.
 59. *ibid.*..
 60. *ibid.*..
 61. untitled, unattributed article, Times (New York), September 13th 1936.
 62. *ibid.*..

63. *ibid.*..It continued 'so far we have only these seedlings...But the impression is of a healthy growth with roots in the soil and with roots in the sound tradition of art which is the heritage of all the civilised world'. This use of extended organic metaphor is particularly visible in Holger Cahill's essay for the catalogue New Horizons In American Art (Museum Of Modern Art - Arno Reprint; New York, 1936) which accompanied the exhibition at the Museum Of Modern Art in 1936.
64. Constance Rourke 'American Art: A Possible Future', American Magazine Of Art July 1935; vol.xxviii, no. 7.
65. *ibid.*..
66. Aline Kistler 'We Are What We Are', American Magazine Of Art September 1935; vol.xxviii, no.9.
67. Donald J. Bear 'Ernest Fiene's Paintings Of New York', American Magazine Of Art February 1937; vol.xxx, no.2.
68. *ibid.* This developing anti-modernism, systematised on the Federal Art Project's Index Of American Design (see Chapter 5), was also articulated in E.M. Benson's review of the Museum Of Modern Art's 'Cubism And Abstract Art' show, also held in 1936. In the American Magazine Of Art April 1936; vol.xxix, no.4, Benson wrote: 'the day of reckoning in the field of Abstract Art is upon us. If you have been reluctant to make up your mind about the merit of the numerous isms that have flourished on European soil since the death of Cezanne, now is the time to take an accounting... Don't be deceived by those neat classifications. You'll find that they are just about as reliable as signposts on a country road...one wonders whether it wouldn't be better to jnnk the lot of them and start all over again'.
69. Elizabeth McCausland 'Color Lithography', Printer December 1937; vol.viii, no.2.
70. For a discussion of the differing types of realist representational modes co-existing in America in the 1930s, see Milton Brown's The Modern Spirit: American Painting 1908-1935, pp.57-68.
71. From a broadcast by Cahill, Station WHN, Tuesday March 30th 1937.FVOC/1086/AAA, 'They have shown their ability to worktogether, to co-operate for the good of the community as a whole'.
72. As has been explained, the key term Citizen/People, within New Deal 'National-Popular' discourse, over-determines all other subject-positions. Thus,,for example, this discourse articulates the subject-position 'art critic' qua 'popular subject' or the subject-position 'gallery visitor' qua 'popular subject', as is discussed in Chapter 3.
73. See Introduction, note 21.
74. 'Print-Making: A New Tradition' - Federal Art Gallery 225 West 57th St., New York. FVOC/1086/AAA.
75. From a document entitled 'Exhibitions At New York Federal Art Gallery: A Review Of The Art Of The Future' (no date).HC/1107/AAA. It says 'another thought in connection with contemporary trends and more particularly

in connection with the work of the Project is the lack of self-consciousness in the work of these Project artists. In the development of Western art from the middle ages to the present day, there has been from age to age a definite increase in the self-consciousness of the artist and this trend reached its high point in Post-War Paris in the work of such men as Picasso and the contemporary sur-realists. We believe that this trend has now definitely been turned...' The relationship between self-consciousness and Modernist practice is discussed in Chapter 5.

76. 'Exhibitions', by Mary Morsell.
77. This phrase seems unusually jarring and is bound up with long established dominant notions about the natural constituency for cultural activity and sensibility - 'the public' - understood as a field of subjects with equal rational knowledge, aptitude and power. For a discussion of this concept in the development of the critical discourse on English Literature, see Terry Eagleton The Function Of Criticism (Verso; London, 1984).
78. 'Exhibitions'.
79. *ibid.*
80. *ibid.*
81. In a letter, July 21st 1936. FAP/DC54/AAA.
82. Cahill to Ellen S. Woodward, August 18th 1936. FAP/DC54/AAA.
83. Neumeyer to Morsell, October 9th 1936. FAP/DC54/AAA.
84. A fairly short-lived response which began to turn against the Federal Art Project and other salient aspects of the New Deal's spending programme from about 1937 onwards, contemporaneous with mounting political opposition to Roosevelt.
85. These reports were contained in FAP/DC54/AAA and constitute a selective representation of the general press response to the exhibition. Susanne laFollette, 'Towards An American Art', Nation (no date).
86. John William Rodgers, no title, Times Herald (Dallas) no date.
87. Charles Z. Offin 'The Government As Art Patron', Brooklyn Eagle (no date).
88. Helen Buchalter 'Native Painting Turns To Vigorous Expression' Daily News (Washington), no date.
89. Elizabeth Noble 'New Horizons' Art Front, (no date). Edwin Alden Jewell remarked in the Times (New York), 'the Federal Art Project does serve as a blueprint to indicate the function that art might and should serve in society', no title, no date.
90. Melville Upton 'Regional Rather Than Aesthetic Horizons' Sun (Baltimore), no date.
91. Unattributed 'WPA "New Horizons" Greatest Art Show Of 1936' World Telegram (New York) Saturday January 2nd 1937.
92. *ibid.* 'though there were any number of first rate works...developing a truly indigenous style.' This distinction was to become very problematic because, along with the Project's attempt to popularise the production of art, the Project also attempted to

similarly 'popularise' the production of 'art criticism' - that is, with the art critic qua 'popular subject'. See Note 72.

93. F.A. Whiting Jr., no title, American Magazine Of Art August 1936; vol.xxix, no.8.
94. This is discussed in Chapter 7.
95. May 20th 1940. FAP/DC54/AAA.

CHAPTER 3

Nationalising Art: The Community Art Centre
Programme Of The Federal Art Project

Within the newly established Federal Art Project, the Community Art Centre programme represented one central strategy in the formulation of the State's radical cultural policy and was devised to engender the practical dissolution of the antagonism between the subject-positions 'artist' and 'citizen' as they were constituted in official Federal Art Project discourse. The Community Art Centre programme, planned as an extending network of dispersed sites for the teaching, exhibition and general discussion of art and the role of the artist in New Deal America, was designed to activate an irreversible transformation of the economic and social forces in urban industrial capitalist society perceived as responsible for creating the alienating division of labour between 'free, creative artists' and the vast populace of 'culturally-deprived citizens'. While the Public Works Of Art Project had largely intervened to support established artists whose markets and livelihoods had been decimated by the Slump and the early years of the Depression, the Federal Art Project's commitment was to a particular conception of a radically decentralised and democratised culture. The Project envisaged a 'transitional period' of popular conversion: a sort of cultural-consciousness raising which would eventually lead to the eradication of imported and colonial relations of cultural production ¹. As will be seen, this assault was aimed at both the hegemony of

'Old Master worship' in America and at the rise of European-derived Modernism which was seen as a dangerous exaggeration of the anti-democratic forces inherent in American monopoly capitalism ² .

The growth of the Community Art Centre programme across the United States was rapid and continued even after the Federal Art Project, along with the whole Works Progress Administration, had received massive financial cuts and internal reorganisation in 1939. By December 1937 there were fifty Community Art Centres in states including Virginia, North and South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Illinois, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah. The Community Art Centre programme concentrated on these rural and desert areas, regarding them as the most 'culturally-needy' states in America. A Federal Art Project survey estimated that these centres were being visited to some degree by three million people and that 60,000 citizens were receiving free and continuous art training ³ . Dorothy C. Miller believed such figures showed:

'a definite need for permanent art centers
[and that] the federal galleries have
undoubtedly laid the foundation' ⁴

By the end of 1938, there were sixty two centres in operation in nineteen states and plans existed for five more. It was estimated that eleven million people were then participating in various activities organised by the programme. Despite the reorganisation in 1939, the Federal Art Project began to actively campaign to extend the network of centres ⁵ . In 1940 eighty four were in operation

reaching between twelve and fifteen million people, with an average regular monthly attendance of 350,000 involved in art 'activities' ⁶ .

The Community Art Centre programme was designed to restrict and then reverse the perceived haemorrhaging of 'cultural resources' away from the great mass of settlements and towns in the mid-west, west, south and south-west of America toward the northeastern cities - paradigmatically New York - which had come to dominate the cultural activities and orientation of most professional artists and which were seen as preoccupied with Europe and its 'aristocratic' art-for-art-sake modernist movements ⁷ . The Community Art Centres were to apprehend the perceived 'drift of talent away from home communities all over the country' and re-establish the artists' organic links with the land and people, in places like the south-west, where, the Federal Art Project reported, 'opportunities in the arts have been completely lacking' ⁸ . Thus Community Art Centres functioned as instantiations, material sites and ideological symbols of the New Deal's efforts to redress an imbalance and to reinstate an authentic cultural diversity across the body of the Nation, in opposition to the forces and contradictions active in shaping urban industrial capitalist America and which, in the Slump, had culminated in what seemed like an intractable economic and social dysfunction. According to William Zorach, in a letter to Roosevelt protesting at the planned cuts in the Federal Art Project budget appropriation, the rightness of the Administration's attempts to transform American society in the spirit of Jeffersonian-Whitman

democratic vision was condensed in the cultural policies of the Federal Art Project. The extension of democracy in the United States in the 1930s, articulated as a necessary restraining and restructuring of sectors of monopoly capital and the mitigation of its cultural consequences, consisted in:

'the removal of art from the artificial centers such as New York and the making of it a part of the expression of life of small communities and towns throughout the country' 9

The constitution of the discursive antagonisms of 'citizen/professional artist' and 'country/city' within the statements of Federal Art Project and Community Art Centre administrators were articulated as terms of logical equivalence within a broader set of New Deal State discourses constructed around the antagonism 'democracy/monopoly capital' and its equivalent of 'people/corporation'. The extent to which the notion of a demographically homogenous though culturally diverse 'experience of art' could operate as a synecdoche for a broad extension of democracy through a conglomeration of New Deal reforms entailing economic, social, political and cultural interpellations, was demonstrated by Thomas C. Parker, deputy administrator of the Federal Art Project, in a speech to the Art Reference Round Table Group of the American Library Association, at Kansas City in June 1938:

'Within the past seventy five years America, with its tendency towards materialistic standards, has been a special victim of this fallacy despite its fine heritage of early arts and crafts...Art museums, symphony orchestras and the legitimate stage have all been confined to the metropolitan areas, with the result that the vital relationship between

the artist craftsman and his public, which existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has rapidly declined. Chief among the economic factors responsible for this decline has been the development through rapid industrial changes, of an unhealthy environment for the arts, undermining the contribution of the artist as a valuable member of society. Instead of purchasing the finest work by living American artists, our wealthy art patrons have, almost without exception, considered our painters and sculptors as picturesque and amusing characters who could be seen on free days wandering about the still white marble corridors of our endowed institutions...'

10

The Federal Art Project and the Community Art Centre programme in particular was established in order to resist and reverse such centralisation, specialisation and alienation of 'the artist' from 'the people'. which had progressively occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For the federal artist Lincoln Rothchild, this attempt to integrate artist and public, and the possibility of eventually dissolving the polarity itself, held out for artists 'a new way of life' and would revive a long forgotten function of contributing to the community in a substantial and responsible way¹¹. New Deal democracy, in cultural terms, was constructed as a return to a state anterior to the aberrant social and cultural deformations of the body of America engendered by capitalist development; the Federal Art Project and the Community Art Centres represented a 'corrective' force redistributing 'cultural resources' and energising the now arid zones of a vast American land deprived of its indigenous creativity by the metropolitan growths on its margins. The aspiration

was that of a 'genuine' popular culture, as distinct from a society in which the enjoyment of arts and letters was limited to a few, and yet a popular culture unburdened with all the pejorative associations which Eliot, Leavis and then, later, Clement Greenberg, in his essay 'Avant Garde And Kitsch', had connoted the term. Art and 'the artist', constructed by Federal Art Project discourse, as a 'stranger in thousands of communities' would be welcomed back, given purpose again in social relations based on shared identity and common activity ¹² . If American 'culture' and 'community' were critical problems and themes in New Deal discourse and 'national identity' itself perceived as threatened by disintegration, then the Community Art Centres were to be an active intervention involved in an attempt to reconstitute 'America' as an homogenous entity. In such a reformation, common cultural activities and values were regarded as a *sin qua non* of democratic purpose and national unity ¹³ .

NEW DEAL CULTURAL DEMOCRACY AND THE RACIAL INTERPELLATION

The radical breakdown in the economic order of American society after the Slump in 1929 and its implications for the maintenance of social, political and ideological order in the nation, are constant themes in Community Art Centre discourses and in Federal Art Project policy in general. The return to, or the future construction of, a 'common culture' and the recognition of shared interests throughout American society, were

perceived as essential conditions for the very existence of a unified nation. Both individual bodies and the totality of the 'body-politic' of American society were to be the objects of the State's strategies for reconstructing, reforming and disciplining what were seen as an array of corrosive and heterogenising social and political forces and contradictions. In a 'case-history' recorded by the Federal Art Project under the title of 'Readjustment Of Individuals', it was stated that:

'After eleven months on Transient Relief this man was on the verge of suicide because of the bleak future. He could not get classification as an artist and was thoroughly anti-social in every attitude...'

14

The returning of such cases to Society - the totality of existing legitimate relations between citizen-subjects - and to the order of an 'authentic' cultural and community environment was the central concern of the Community Art Centre programme. Both the city and rural populations of America were seen by the Federal Art Project as contaminated with the diseases of a failed industrial capitalist system. This contamination of American subjects was seen as both deep and widespread but the Community Art Centre programme was to be a mechanism which would bring about the recovery of a unifying cultural-citizenry through the interpellation of American subjects into the State's realm of consensual values and recognised responsibilities. This reconstituted realm would reform the homogenous body a unified Nation.

While the Community Art Centres worked in the 'country' to:

'correct the cultural erosion which has occurred in many sections...where unused cultural resources parallel a general disintegration of community life' 15

in the larger metropolitan areas, with New York City as an inveterate sign of 'the urban', neighbourhood art classes for children were to counter such 'anti-social' activities as truancy from school, window breaking and petty thieving ¹⁶. Within the city, 'gang-life' was seen as constituting a special problem: the Community Art Centres were to discipline and train, inculcate and order the bodies and minds of subjects that had been 'overstimulated by the color, drama and excitement of modern urban life' ¹⁷. The Community Art Centre was to be a site for the reconstruction of common values and traditions, organised around a paradigmatic set of 'American' identities and unities ¹⁸. Children in cities, we are told,

'have lost their racial traditions. They have no place to play except the streets... Project classes in 600 settlement and neighbourhood houses in greater New York have abundantly demonstrated that many youngsters may be kept out of juvenile court...that they are as ready to join together in painting a mural as to rob a nearby grocery store...' 19

Such repeated motifs in Federal Art Project discourse as 'culture starved' ²⁰ and 'culturally-underprivileged' ²¹ indicate the extent to which the Community Art Centre programme was articulated as a 'public service' providing necessary resources 'based on the study of the needs of the American people' ²². If the New Deal Administrations created the first systematic federal welfare organisations,

providing social security benefit, family allowances and old age pensions ²³ , then this State social-welfare was to be supplemented with a State 'cultural-welfare' policy which the federal Government implemented through the Federal Art Project and other Works Progress Administrations. The construction and provision of such 'cultural needs' and their articulation as essential to the general well-being of the 'American People' was integral to the State's capacity to unify subjects - through economic, political and ideological interpellations - within the New Deal 'National-Popular' under the aegis of the Federal State. Such an organising capacity allows us to define the State as a central factor in constructing social and political cohesion.

On such interpellated 'community' - constituting at once a set of material locations dispersed across the United States and an articulated unity based on racial identity - was the black population of America. Black people in America had suffered more during the Depression than the white working class and had received less than the white working class in New Deal welfare and work-relief projects ²⁴ . The Black population of America was the subject of a confidential Works Progress Administration internal report made in 1938 which recommended the integration of blacks more fully into the 'national-unity' constituted around the populist articulation of the New Deal and its antagonism toward sections of monopoly capital in the United States ²⁵ . On the Public Works Of Art Project in New York City only five black artists had been employed, which constituted less than one per cent of

the artists resident in New York State ²⁶ . On the Federal Art Project in 1936, 115 black people were employed or about six per cent of the artists then resident ²⁷ . The eradication of black hostility to Roosevelt's New Deal and the disintegration of antagonisms between white and black in America was regarded as essential to the construction of a culturally homogenous and democratic American society. Black people, through the Community Art Centre programme and other Federal Art Project activities, were to be interpellated in precise and differentiated ways devised to abolish antagonistic subject-positions. Such discourse constructed equivalences amongst the terms black/citizen/artist/people. This discourse constructed these subject-positions as equivalent and non-antagonistic: each term would condense the others. Although not identical subject-positions they were to be constructed as simply different rather than opposed and antagonistic. This principle of 'difference-without-antagonism' characterises the Federal Art Project discourse on black people 'in' the 'community'. While on the one hand:

'Negro art has always been attuned to the rhythmic expression of a people deeply sensitive to the poetic values of life' ²⁸

and black people had 'racial instinct for abstract pattern and simple form' ²⁹ , their specific culture was always also an element, a 'contribution' to a 'rich national culture' ³⁰ . Ceramic work in Washington and craft classes in Negro Community Centres were to 'revive authentic folk traditions' of a race constructed as a simple difference in a plurality of racial differences which together con-

stituted the unity of American culture ³¹ . 'Case No. 3' in the 'Adjustment Of Individuals' monitored the 'progress' of a black woman who, after teaching art classes to her own race, had 'thrown herself into a genuine endeavour to interest others in furthering their interest in Art. As a result, her adjustment is almost complete and she is accomplishing work of genuine community value' ³² .

Such 'interest' in community shown by a black woman was regarded by the Federal Art Project as exemplary: within Community Art Centre discourses a nation would ultimately be founded on the coherence and unity of a community of diverse communities linked in a chain of equivalences constituting the 'National-Popular'. Any antagonistic subject-positions, such as 'Communist' or 'Fascist' were articulated as always outside the equivalential discourses articulating black/citizen/artist/worker and condensing the principle subject-position, that of 'the people'.

We hear that in Washington D.C. 'little boys from Friendship House, including four Italian brothers and five sturdy average American lads, pooled their efforts in a circus mural which turned out to be good enough for inclusion in the exhibition of Project work held at the Phillips' Memorial Gallery in the summer of 1936. These boys formed their own disciplinary committee and settled without fist fights who should do the elephants, who the trained seals, who the clowns and who the flesh tints...' ³³

Art, and its relations of production, are thus transformed from being the site of a condensation of social

conflict and antagonism in industrial capitalist society into being an instance of the reconciliation of such conflicts and the bringing of order, reason and collective will. The Community Art Centres in cities across America are thus intended to construct a unity based on this non-antagonistic difference, operating as a factor of cohesion between:

'Negro children from swift-tempered Manhattan and slower moving Tennessee; children of Italians, Hebrews, Greeks and Americans who have almost lost their native traditions in tenement squalor, color-loving Slavs and Bohemians who have settled in rural districts as farmers, miners and factory workers' 34

Harlem Community Art Centre, in New York City, was to bring about a 'true and brilliant renaissance of the spirit of the Negro people of America' 35 . This cultural and social rebirth would, like that of 'so many other races which belong in our aesthetic heritage' 36 contribute to a 'National-Popular' recultivation of resources and values, establishing order through a 'regularity-in-dispersion' based on simple difference 37 . Such order was also a discipline and a training:

'In Greater New York, members of the Paragon Boys Club composed mostly of bootblacks and Newsboys, have also found mural painting more exciting than poolrooms...' 38

The activity of art-making then, was to both revive latent racial traditions and knowledges as elements in a new democratic culture and the Community Art Centre itself was to become the locus for the State's construction of a new social rigour:

'In one of the Negro-extension galleries, which

are a unique feature of Project art work, children have shown a rhythmic racial instinct previously confined to music and dancing, in a mural which, though still without title might be aptly called 'All God's Chillun Got Wings'. Further more, the teacher found that such problems as clean hands were dealt with more easily by the clear demonstration that smudgy fingers make smudges on murals...This pride of cleanliness in the art classes has carried over naturally into the home and has also found favourable results in the communities covered by these classes'

39

Lawrence A. Jones, a black artist writing about the Federal Art Project in New Orleans in Art For The Millions, told of the 'ample opportunity to watch the cultural progress of my people', a progress articulated as a moment within the New Deal's reconstruction of American democracy around a plurality of non-antagonistic subject-positions constituting a discourse of simple difference.⁴⁰ .

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORALITIES

While the larger urban centres were seen as both product and cause of the evils of industrial capitalism - the division of labour, mass production, 'racial dilution' and the absence of an homogenous social identity - they were also recognised as the saturated sites of cultural production. Cities were the gathering points for the 'country's' artists, now ripped from their organic and authentic origins in the land and dependent on the art market and coterie of 'art-appreciators' whose wealth was derived from their city-based activities. On the other hand:

'In the smaller cities of the US where living conditions are generally more healthy in a purely physical sense, another type of problem produces spiritual maladjustments and psychological difficulties, not only for the child, but for the entire communities' 41

These were the people with no museum facilities or 'active art interests', in localities where 'a cultural erosion' had occurred 'that is quite as serious as the impoverishment of the soil' ⁴² . Such 'psychological' and 'spiritual' maladjustments were seen as caused partially by the 'overstimulation' of urban life and the alienation of its social relations and also as the result of a collective memory loss. The Past, which contained the essential cultural 'genes' with the information and characteristics constitutive of national identity had not been lost for good (how could it be if the New Deal was to be articulated as asset of recoveries?), but it had been forgotten and seriously detached from contemporary American experience. Within the network of both State and non-state discourses, through which 'the nation' was to be constructed as a tangible entity in popular consciousness, among the most important components was a produced sense of The Past which could act as a ground for the proliferation of other definitions of what counted as normal, appropriate or possible ⁴³ . 'We have not lost our culture', said a Community Art Centre administrator in a speech to the 30th Annual Convention of The American Federation Of Arts, in May 1939:

'we have merely forgotten it. We have been expanding our frontiers, building our skyscrapers, amazing the world with our inventive and business genius. The values of

art were lost in the midst of well-merited national pride in our astonishing geographical and industrial development'

44

To help the people remember, the Walker Art Centre in Minnesota was retrieving American Art of the Past and the present, both of which were to be made part of 'the contemporary scene' ⁴⁵. According to the Minnesota State Art Director, D.S. Defenbacher, the Community Art Centre was presenting art in a new way in which the Past and present were related and the present then 'projected as a recognizable reality' ⁴⁶. Again, the Federal Art Project produces a discourse of equivalential terms which are simply different from each other. The articulation artist/black/worker/citizen, over-determined by the subject-position 'people' was then joined by a discourse comprised of equivalent temporal positionalities, through which antagonistic historical discontinuities were elided. This discourse consisted of the equivalences of 'ancient art'/'modern art'/Past/Present/Tradition/Innovation, over-determined by the principle of 'democratic continuum'. According to Defenbacher, the Walker Art Centre related each temporality to 'human meaning and contemporary experience' ⁴⁷. Contemporary experience thus constituted the over-determining temporality also, acting as the discourse's articulating principle. Concern for the Past was to do with its quality as 'usable' in the present. Its value was not in terms of detached scholarship or reverie, but in its capacity to generate a significant contemporary movement. While the Past and present, as elements in the discourse of the Federal Art

Project and the Community Art Centre programme were not articulated as antagonistic or in active opposition to each other, this was also true in broader terms: the hegemonizing discourses of the New Deal articulated its present policies as a moment of democratic rupture which nevertheless were faithful to a pre-existing chain of democratic moments in American history - 'the Founding Fathers', 'the Constitution', 'the War of Independence', etc. This aporia of 'break within a continuity' thus constituted the articulating principle of New Deal discourses and corresponded also to the apparent paradox of regularity in dispersion.

The expelled antagonistic terms within Federal Art Project discourse were that of the 'aristocratic artist' and 'modernist coterie', paratactical terms opposed to 'democratic artist-citizen' and 'people-as-public'. Such terms were banished from the Federal Art Project's equivalential discourse and articulated only as oppositional entities, ineluctably antagonistic and hostile:

'This is why we must be concerned with the
living artist, rather than ivory tower
contemplation' 48

The Past, in Federal Art Project discourse, and particularly those of the Community Art Centre programme, belonged to 'the now' and the New Deal was its heir. The Community Art Centres were to be 'living' refutations of the 'average museum', constructed in Federal Art Project discourse as an alienated and alienating institution which disarticulated 'fragments of the past' from contemporary social meaning ⁴⁹. The contents of the museums, these 'legacies from richmen's

homes' were to be replaced with art and activity from the people of the Community Art Centres ⁵⁰ . This would break the fallacy that 'art speaks to a very limited number' with the peculiar ability to 'appreciate beauty' ⁵¹ . According to the Federal artist Louis Guglielmi, writing in Art For The Millions, artists were returning to the 'life of the people', 'coming from within the people' and the 'resulting art will celebrate the experience of the race' ⁵² . In opposition to modernism and European-derived art practices in general, the Community Art Centres were engaged in an 'honest search' for an everyday art that mirrored 'everyday experience' and the 'sense and sentiment of the American People' ⁵³ .

MODERNITY, MODERNISM AND CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION

The State-sponsored Community Art Centres were to give communities back their heritage from America's cultural past and to provide, therein, non-capitalist, non-industrial and non-urban aesthetic standards for the future ⁵⁴ . The South, southwest, midwest and the far-west were especially conceived as the object of Community Art Centre operation. In one sense, perhaps, New York City was thought of as an irretrievable aristocratic enclave of the 'self-conscious artist', who, while not paradigmatically modernist, was essentially concerned with a European cultural Other, with no place in the Federal Art Project's plans for a real American Renaissance. Compounded with this was the knowledge that cities were

also the producers of 'mass culture', decidedly different, in Federal Art Project discourse, from their own project for a 'popular culture'. One Project statement said:

'Although the movies, the radio, and the automobile have their very definite place in modern life, the creative impulse of the child and adult must not be starved or stifled. It is clear that the enrollment of 80,000 youngsters of all nations under the Project in a coast-to-coast program, constitutes genuine evidence that children eagerly seek an outlet for phantasies suppressed by modern civilisation and the work produced shows that they have an instinct for originality, form and color which can not be satisfied by the predigested and syndicated forms of Art which are only too prevalent today' 55

This 'machine-age' with 'money-orientated pleasures' was producing, according to one Community Art Centre statement, 'the tremendous increase in insanity and in general maladjustments found in the records of contemporary neurology' 56 . Such references to insanity and 'spiritual alienation' as products of city life are ubiquitous in Federal Art Project discourse and are related quite specifically to the Project's antagonism toward modernist ideology and abstract art which were themselves regarded as symptoms of such urban neurosis and social alienation.

The rantings of Thomas Craven and other contemporary critics on the 'psychic' implications of modernist art practice and its 'un-natural' relations of production within urban centres appears in modified form - dressed as psychoanalytic or psychiatric diagnosis - in much of Federal Art Project discourse. The Community Art Centres can, in this sense, be understood as an attempt to intervene into the perceived universal disintegration of

America's collective psyche, which is articulated as the progressive detachment of the people from the 'reality' of America's authentic social and cultural Past and their return to an either 'artificial' mass culture or the urban intelligentsia to a referent-less abstract art⁵⁷. Here the comparison is made with non-industrial and non-capitalist societies, in order to illustrate the social and cultural unity which the Federal art Project, through the Community Art Centres, hoped to achieve in America. Holger Cahill would speak of the southwest Pueblo Indians as still belonging to 'coherent' societies, where art traditions were rooted firmly in 'communal experience' and was kept alive through participation by the 'whole people'⁵⁸. While such social and cultural anomy in contemporary American society had produced, according to Federal Art Project discourse, the antagonism 'artist'/'people' and the process was regarded as too advanced in many adults for a complete 'cure', children were seen by the Community Art Centre administration as the prime site for the recuperative strategies of the State's intervention into American culture. 'The work in these classes', Cahill said:

'reflect the child's enviroment, for ~~the~~ basically these children are little realists, depicting the world as they see it at home, in the city streets, in schools and churches or synagogues [note again this chain of simple differences] without any false sentimentality. We are not particularly interested in developing what is known as art appreciation. We are interested in raising a generation...sensitive to their visual enviroment and capable of helping to improve it'

59

Children's art was doubly valorised as it attained these qualities of a blend of 'realism, humor and tenderness' ⁶⁰ without 'conscious effort' ⁶¹ . Such self-consciousness was regarded as the modernists' central characteristic: conscious, that is, not of 'the social', 'the real' or 'the people', but of painterly form, technique and the canon itself as the doctrine behind 'art-for-art-sake'. Children's art was also valorised as the work of creative agents producing without reference to market forces and determinations. It was said that:

'The child sees truthfully and paints boldly.
He has learned no technique and he has no
desire to sell his work or seek prestige' 62

The child worked directly from personal experience or imagination, unmediated by 'modernist-intellectual' pretensions and 'carefully rehearsed' techniques ⁶³ . Such experience and imagination is seen by the Federal Art Project as belonging, necessarily, to all citizens, rather than to a quirky minority produced through the 'unnatural' division of labour in contemporary capitalist society, providing 'precious objects' for an equally esoteric audience of connoisseurs.

This discourse of equivalent subject-positions in Federal Art Project statements, articulating, as has been seen, citizen/artist/worker/people, projects an ultimate dissolution of the plurality of terms in a future where 'artist' would also mean 'citizen' and where both would be articulated as 'workers' within the culturally diverse, yet cohesive entity, constituting the

American Nation.

The proof of the value of the Community Art Centre programme in transforming the 'cultural landscape' of America, through a State-directed redistribution of art and artist back into the mythic 'homelands' ⁶⁴ and away from the northeast cities was, in one sense, contained in the discursive expulsion of the modernist subject of 'militant individualism' ⁶⁵. In opposition to this, as the other pole of the antagonistic relation, was constructed either the 'ordinary citizen', which features constantly in Federal Art Project discourse, or another discursive equivalent, a 'healthy anonymity' ⁶⁶. This transformation in subject-position was conditional also on a radical re-ordering of the 'artist' in relation to the people as 'audience'. In a paper entitled 'Educational Aspects Of The Federal Art Project', given in September 1937, it was stated:

'Art should not be something to be seen on monday and forgotten on tuesday. If it is to be a vital educational force in the lives of the people, the art center and the museum must breakdown the barrier of self-defense built up in America by a strange "high brow" philosophy which says that art can only be appreciated by a limited group of people'

67

This notion of the 'healthy anonymity' of the 'artist/citizen' in Federal Art Project discourse would do away with the cult of sensibility which modernism, through Roger Fry and Clive Bell, had constructed as the condition of authentic art and 'serious' art appreciation. While the production of art by a 'sensitive consciousness' and its equally 'sensitive' reception by an individual endowed with

the gift to recognise the true 'aesthetic' values of art, united two different but homologous subject-positions, the Community Art Centre programme was to unify 'artist' and 'citizen' around a 'community-conscious', 'collective experience based' and thoroughly 'land orientated' relation. As Girolamo Piccolo, a federal artist, said in Art For The Millions:

'We on the project no longer work blindly;
nor are we isolated from society. We have
a client. Our client is the American
people' 68

In a Federal Art Project press release on January 1st 1939, we hear that 'WPA artists are interpreting America to Americans' ⁶⁹. It continued 'as a result of the increased interest in art which the Project Community Art Centres have made possible, artists, realising that their creative developments may find greater stimulation in small communities, are taking up residence there' ⁷⁰. This 'there' referred to the 'culturally-underprivileged' towns of Laramie, Greenboro, Charlestown, Memphis, Sioux City and Norris. Such Community Art Centres and their teaching programmes were to activate present, but repressed, forgotten or submerged talent 'to allow the child to express what he feels and in his own way' ⁷¹. One art teacher remarked that every child was something of a Cezanne, but only in that they had an innocent eye. Such children were not concerned with any theories or 'isms' and painted only what interested them ⁷². Community Art Centres proclaimed a new era in American civilisation: 'for the first time in American art history' - a phrase which recurs - artists were not deserting their 'home

communities' for the city and its modernist/unAmerican
catories ⁷³ . The turning of this tide of artists was
a sign of a general New Deal reinvestment in 'the land'
and in 'the people': both were true sites for the recon-
struction of the Nation, based on the recovery of the
Past and a concomitant 'democratic folk tradition' ⁷⁴ .

The extent to which the Community Art Centres were
regarded by the Federal Art Project as marking the
supercession of the 'artist/people' dualism in American
culture and also as part of a generalised New Deal-
organised turning point in the history of American
democracy is demonstrated in a speech given by Donald J.
Bear, the director of the Dever Art Museum. For him, the
Federal Art Project 'revolution' had international
significance:

'This is the first time since the middle ages
that the artist has joined hands with the
community...these artists of America, through
the Government agency, are creating a new mode
of graphic communication that is democratic and
we believe possibly more actual and widespread
than the country has yet seen' 75

Such references to the 'middle ages' - its paradigmatic
'communal organisation' of cultural production and,
ofcourse, the supposed anonymity of its artists - constantly
emerge in Federal Art Project discourses, along with the
notion that the forging of New Deal democracy in America
in the 1930s was producing a 'more harmonious way of
life' though~~it~~ contiguous with the absence of the capitalist
division of social labour in the middle ages.

Hence the State's project of 'penetrating to the
core of the community' was designed to both restore a lost

or displaced social and cultural unity and also to actively construct a new Nation ⁷⁶ . This would be based on developing the legitimate function of the State in ordering the lives of the people, protecting them from the 'money changers in the temple' and reconstituting the social and cultural values of America ⁷⁷ . In this perspective, the Community Art Centres were potentially the source for a transformation of the nation that went far beyond the activity of art making and its proper social valorisation in the context of an integrated community life. The Community Art Centre programme can be understood as part of the 'Roosevelt Revolution', the theme of liberal historiography, in which the New Deal meant the replenishment of democracy, the rescue of the federal Government from the clutches of the corporations and the significant redistribution of political power to marginalised groups in society ⁷⁸ . According to this interpretation, the Roosevelt Administrations marked the end of the passive or impartial State and the beginning of 'positive' government, of the interventionist State acting to offset concentrations of private power and affirming the rights and responding to the needs of the underprivileged. The Community Art Centres were a facet in this provision of aid and the upholding of rights:

'the purpose of the Federal Art Project is to make American citizens conscious not only of their own resources as individuals [⁷⁹], but also of the artistic resources and possibilities of their communities...our Art Center is focussing civic attention along those lines and trying to co-operate in city-planning'

It was for this reason - in co-ordinating 'city-planning' and providing integrated social and cultural 'services' - that the Community Art Centre programme was regarded as 'indispensable' ⁸¹ . This was especially true for a city like New York, where what was regarded as being at stake was the very 'salvation of the creative spirit of Youth in the largest and most complex city in the world' ⁸² .

RECONSTITUTING 'AMERICA' IN COMMUNITY ART CENTRE DISCOURSE

The possibility of 'America' reconstituting 'itself' as a unified nation based upon the construction of a populist hegemony which articulated political discourse in terms of a broad opposition between the 'great mass' of the people against a 'power bloc' consisting of sections of monopoly capital, the federal judiciary and reactionary Republican 'aristocrats', depended on the ability of the State to establish coherent equivalences between different subject-positions ⁸³ . As has been seen, in Federal Art Project and specifically Community Art Centre discourse, this process consisted of two stages. Firstly, antagonisms were created which established the limits of the hegemonic discourse, such as the polarity 'modernist artist'/'common American'. The first term would survive in Federal Art Project discourse only to be constantly constructed as an antagonistic pole: it was expelled from the discourse as an equivalent term. This constituted the second stage: the establishment of a discourse consisting of 'simple differences' between non-antagonistic subject-positions which could allow a

'suturing of the social' to appear ⁸⁴. While one such chain of equivalences in Federal Art Project discourse was constructed as artist/citizen/worker/black/woman, with the over-determining subject-position consisting of 'the people', a second equivalential discourse was constructed which consisted of concentric 'community positions' across the United States. This would stretch from the 'micro communities' (villages, townships), through 'to-be-reconstructed' urban sectors (large metropolises), across racial, sexual, religious and class constituencies (black people, women, Catholics, Jews, the bourgeoisie/working classes) and forming the 'macro-community', co-extensive with 'the nation' as both the limit and the definition of the socio-cultural State. Simple difference without antagonism was thus the object of Federal Art Project discourse which announced an hegemonic logic articulating the unity of an American Past and yet-to-be-constructed, but nevertheless, endogenous Future. In a Community Art Centre news story entitled 'A WPA Art Project Brings Water To The Desert', by Charlotte H. Upton from the Spokane Junior League, it was reported:

'the classes are surely an experiment in democracy, for all kinds and colors rub elbows - children from the "social register" work with youngsters from relief families, members of the Junior League and their friend's maids and laundresses work side by side, too absorbed in their problems to be even conscious of social differences...' ⁸⁵

So 'art activity' in a Community Art Centre was to both embody and prefigure a future state of 'participatory' or 'experiential democracy'. Within such a society, order

would be based on the elimination of antagonism between subjects, on a plurality of dispersed but equivalent subject-positions.

In a paper entitled 'Design For A Democracy: The People's Art Center In St. Louis', it was said that the 'artistry and realism of the democratic way of life' is to typify the future society of America ⁸⁶. 'Artistry' in this formulation becomes a matter of 'skill' and 'achievement', related to socially meaningful activity, while 'realism' is counterposed to the terms 'abstraction' and 'modernism', which are expelled from the discourse as synonyms for 'distance' and 'aloofness'. This discourse proliferates its terms of non-antagonistic difference:

'Into the Art Center [into the ark?] came teacher and student, adult and youngster, male and female, Negro and White, Catholic and Jew. The Center fuses various racial, religious and cultural backgrounds into a common, creative endeavour' ⁸⁷

Art and art activity within the Community Art Centres was thus one site for the reconstitution of the authentic American Nation: in a democracy, Thomas C. Parker told the American Library Association, art can and ought to belong to everyone ⁸⁸. In a 1937 Federal Art Project press release it was said that communities are not slow to realise that youngsters in the Community Art Centres 'will be the citizens of the future' ⁸⁹. 'Citizenship', constituted on formally equal political rights and social responsibilities to the State as the embodiment of the will of the People required a reciprocal 'cultural citizenship' based on a similarly unified access and activity:

'If America is to become an homogenous cultural unit, an equal distribution of cultural advantage must be made possible...the Community Art Centers are designed especially to do this' 90

Nationalising the community was thus the goal and the preoccupation of Community Art Centre policy as part of the Federal Art Project's strategy for reinventing the heroic democratic past in New Deal America. This 'National Past' can be thought of as a controlling attribute of citizenship: something that at a generalised level enabled citizens to find a unity between themselves and to override socio-political contradictions and differences ⁹¹. This meant, in America, uniting 'the hardy pioneer...who built sturdy cities in the Far West' with 'Southern Cities, clinging to the traditions of classic porticos and exquisite manners' and drawing together 'the coal-mining regions of Virginia' with the 'kaleidoscope of Manhattan slums' ⁹². These terms of equivalence, repeatedly articulated in Federal Art Project discourse, themselves situated 'talk' itself as the basis for collective social activity. Democracy, Cahill said, only functions where talk is free and natural:

'A community center is a place for talk - talk in the forms of club meetings, political rallies, or literary lectures, in small groups or large - talk in the form of the casual conversation with people with common interests' 93

And if America no longer had its 'corner grocery store', its 'sewing circles, domestic crafts, looms by the hearth, and its own town-meetings' ⁹⁴, then the Community Art Centre programme, as part of the Federal Art Project,

two years before the reorganisation of the Project which fundamentally changed its national power structure and its capacity to theorise and direct its own resources ⁶⁵ . It is significant both in terms of how it demonstrates the long-term planning taking place within the Federal Art Project concerning paths of its own possible development and function and in terms of how, even at that early stage, a regulatory function for the State was conceived by Cahill as having an advisedly 'invisible' presence. In this sense, it suggests that an uneasiness still persisted , at the highest level of the Federal Art Project's power structure, concerning the legitimacy of the State's involvement with cultural production ⁶⁶ .

Cahill wanted the Federal State to involve itself in the organisation of 'regional celebrations' of 'American life' ⁶⁷ . Again, as with the Index Of American Design, this can be characterised as a recuperative operation: the re-establishment and maintenance of authentic American folk-cultural practices and discourses. California alone, Cahill said, had more than 150 annual fiestas which to him represented capillary networks of access to the Nation and its diverse citizen-subjects in situ ⁶⁸ . The function of the State in relation to these unique activities is presented as putatively passive and surveillance-oriented. Cahill suggests a comprehensive cartography of regional activities, recording events and collating data concerning festival attendance, participation, financial expenditure and the origins of the events ⁶⁹ . This State surveillance is clearly intended to allow the continued reproduction of these cultural

activities and towards this end Cahill suggests that a 'Central Producing Unit' should be established. According to Cahill, this would concern itself with producing and employing 'experts' to 'plan, prepare and write the entire program of celebrations' ⁷⁰ . One project might be, he says, to discover 'all authentic cowboy songs' ⁷¹ . He is also keen to point out that the Central Producing Unit would serve as a 'quality control' centre, in order to 'keep productions up to a generally high standard and to carry into all the Fiesta productions a common denominator of quality' ⁷² . The second function of the Central Production Unit is that of practical involvement with festivals, employing directors in art, music, dance, choral work,, costumes and settings ⁷³ .

It becomes clear from this point that Cahill is actually advocating the State's integral involvement in these cultural activities - a comprehensive 'statization' designed to maintain their annual occurrence and as a means of interpellating all citizens as State-subjects through their involvement with regional folk festivals. Such State experts would constitute 'field units' in each locality and would be activated at strategic moments. According to Cahill, these field units:

'would launch their respective events six or nine months ahead of the event date and their prime purpose would be to utilise existing community agencies and to bring into action groups of persons not at present involved in the preparation of the fiesta, but who, through interest in art, acting, dancing, singing, etc would logically be the ones to participate in folk celebrations'

74

At one level, this activity of preparation and involvement works to bring the subject into regular and dependent contact with the functionaries of the State. From Cahill's 'New Dealer' point of view, this contact is positive, identificatory and mutually beneficial: the concept of the 'minimal State' with its essentially negative function and parasitic basis, is anathema to Cahill's model. Through these festival activities the local 'community' is conjoined necessarily with concrete representatives from the State as the embodiment of National-Community ⁷⁵. The State's abstract existence as Law and Power is objectified and made contiguous with local and regional popular activities ⁷⁶.

Cahill is careful to say that in the State's direct involvement with these cultural activities, 'local material must certainly form the background of any pageant' ⁷⁷. The 'specialities' of the particular community must be paramount. This function of the State must be, paradoxically, both visible and invisible. Visible because Cahill's project is for the State, through this agency of resource and recouperation, to apprehend and interpellate the subject as the National-State subject through a diverse set of regional activities. Invisible because there must be never be any sense of 'super-imposed' or 'arty' subject matter ⁷⁸. The National-State must exist, it must not make itself. The Citizen is an axiom, not a construction. It is this structure of 'sound cultural elements intrinsic to regional life' ⁷⁹ which provides and facilitates the emergence of an audience of 'thousands all over the country' ⁸⁰. This constitutes

the Nation America and the National-Popular in America. The State, in abolishing antagonisms, must abolish itself as the product of antagonism ⁸¹ .

STATE SOCIAL MANAGEMENT: THE PLANNING COUNCIL

The second paradigm of a strategic modulation in the role of the resources and capacities of the Federal Art Project's ensemble of activities and programmes links the specific cultural field with a wider set of issues relating to the nature and function of the Works Progress Administration. This paradigm highlights especially well the location of Federal Art Project discourses on cultural 'rights' and 'needs' within the Works Progress Administration's general theoretical conception of the proper activities and functions of a 'community'. In a Works Progress Administration discussion document entitled 'What Area Should A Social Planning Council Serve?' the Administration can be seen actively theorising the objects upon which it operates and the ontology of that object ⁸² . The document is well aware of the problematical distinction between what it defines as an authentic 'community' and the wider interests of the Nation-State. According to the document, the basic area of service is the community:

'Arbitrarily defined in this instance, a community is a group of people obviously and self-consciously acting together in the chief concerns of life and living within a reasonably limited area, which may or may not have legal status' 83

This 'community', as both inveterate referent that

guarantees the efficacy of cultural discourse and as a discursive entity itself, has become threatened again ⁸⁴ . This occurs at the moment when 'its' existence was to be further secured by the return to it of both cultural agents (the Citizen-artists) and the economic and social services which New Deal State discourse promised ⁸⁵ . With a worsening of the economy after Roosevelt's re-election in 1936 and the growth of anti-communism and anti-socialism as an effective force in destabilising elements of the 'Roosevelt Coalition', the survival of the 'community' was in doubt ⁸⁶ .

Mrs Florence Kerr, director of the Professional and Services Division of the Works Progress Administration, had echoed Charles Beard's opinion, in arguing that the temporary nature of the Administration's relief activities was handicapping its efforts to develop 'long-term planning procedures and principles' ⁸⁷ . Such procedures were becoming necessary because it was being 'realised generally' ⁸⁸ that unemployment in the United States was a 'more or less constant feature of a mature and contracting economy' ⁸⁹ . From this perspective, the document argues that the relief agencies established by the New Deal State will become responsible for long-term planning for the provision of all social and cultural services to the community ⁹⁰ . The Works Progress Administration will establish what are called by the document, 'Social Planning Councils'. These, the document says, should be populated and controlled by those 'who are sincerely interested in the betterment of their own community through taking advantages of the services

offered' ⁹¹ . Such planning involved functions which were both managerial and technical. According to a note dated June 16th 1939, the Works Progress Administration staff:

'now possesses a more important deposit of knowledge and experience necessary for economic and social planning than exists ⁹² anywhere else in the country'

On the panel responsible for theorising both the nature of 'community' and necessary services, was Holger Cahill ⁹³.

The Community Art Centre programme organised by the Federal Art Project here becomes a component part of what are simply called 'Community Centers' ⁹⁴ . These centres, the document says, are direct outgrowths of community needs and planning ⁹⁵ . The document then goes on to theorise how a community of 3000 population could be effectively 'serviced' by a Social Planning Council based in the Community Centre. It may be that this model for the efficient provision of 'legitimate' social services to a community originated as a contingency plan for the operation of the Nation in war or as a schematic account of what a 'more thoroughly WPA'd' American society would consist of if 'properly' planned. A note at the end of the document asks for the detailed account of necessary control procedures and activities to be ready not in two years, but in ten months ⁹⁶ .

In a mode similar to Cahill's model of the Central Producing Unit for regional festivals, the function of the Social Planning Council as surveyor is stressed. It must identify the composition of the population together with the industrial and commercial concerns of the community. The Community-Centres will have to provide

adult education, nursery education, community health services, libraries and reading rooms, combinations of museums and art galleries, recreational activities and community theatres ⁹⁷ . In the interests of the 'smooth functioning' of these services, the report suggests that any duplication of activities between agencies cease and that any one community should be placed under the control of one city 'supervisor', one of whose functions would be:

'to see that a common purpose, namely, community service, was one of the end objectives of each individual phase of work' 98

It should be stressed that both this document and Cahill's lecture on the orchestration of folk festivals in America represent aspects of the Federal Art Project's policy-theorising of its role in - and the future development of - American society in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As with the discourses on design and efficiency around the New York World Fair, the outbreak of war seemed to some at the time to be unthinkable and the almost euphoric planning optimism which permeates these manifestos of change now appears grotesquely misconceived. But a State planning and co-ordination function had developed and was developing further. This involved both the well-publicised 'display' projects, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, lauded as it was as a triumph of rationalisation and, as is seen here, a less salient transformation of the role of visual representation and cultural activities in relation to the needs of the State ⁹⁹ .

Though this State deployment of representers in the area of visual art, music and theatre had seemed to some

to have occurred more by accident than design, the State was not slow to realise the diverse functions to which these forces could be adapted as the need and possibility arose ¹⁰⁰. The 'State' here is, as always, a problem of definition and attribution: its policy-formation and operation taking place on a multitude of administrative levels and across a set of stratified power networks (national, state, local; theoretical, managerial, practical) and chains of command. Political conflict within the State - such as over the relative autonomy of various agencies: the Works Progress Administration, etc - interacted with the conflictual forces operating on this relatively stable structure of agencies from outside and which seemed ready to sabotage some of the State's most important activities reshaping the hegemonic discourse in America ¹⁰¹. In considering the third paradigm, a final case of the modulation in the role of cultural producers mobilised by the State, we see an occasion when more than the usual amount of consensus existed between both State and non-state personnel over the efficacy of the strategic cultural project in question. This also relates issues becoming prevalent in American culture and politics in the late 1930s to those of Post-War America in the Cold War and beyond. It most significantly concerns the role of private corporations in the construction of a national culture in America and the establishment of power intersections across the putative boundaries of 'State' and 'non-state' institutions and activities ¹⁰².

THE STATE AND 'INTER-AMERICAN' CULTURAL RELATIONS

In October 1939, a conference took place in the State Department in Washington D.C., called The Conference On Inter-American Relations In The Field Of Art ¹⁰³. Those who attended the conference later formed a committee called The Continuation Committee For Inter-American Relations. Its members included: C.G. Abbot, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; John E. Abbott, the Executive Vice-President of the Museum Of Modern Art; George Biddle, the Vice-Chairman of the Artists' Conference of the Americas; Ed Bruce, head of the Section of Fine Arts in the Treasury; Holger Cahill, head of the Federal Art Project; Walter W.S. Cook, Chairman of the Institute Of Fine Arts; Stuart Davis, National Chairman of the American Artists' Congress; Rene d'Harnoncourt, Executive Secretary of Arts And Crafts in the Office Of Indian Affairs; Mrs. Concha Romera James, Chief of the Division Of Intellectual Co-operation in the Pan-American Union; Edward A. Jewell, art critic of the New York Times; Roy Stryker, Chief of the Historical Section of the Division of Information in the Department of Agriculture; Ben M. Charrington, Chief of the Division of Cultural Relations of the Department of State and Adolf Berle Jr., Assistant Secretary of State ¹⁰⁴. In July 1938, the Department of Cultural Relations had been established to 'facilitate' the bettering of relations between the United States and the rest of the world. This was part of Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbour' policy designed to bring about and improve links of all-kinds between America and its allies ¹⁰⁵.

Within the context of this study, it is possible to define these activities as elements in the attempted construction of an external US cultural imperialism, in order to secure valuable sources of raw materials to protect the nation in the likelihood of war. It constitutes a developing strategy of cultural diplomacy, with both short-term and long-term goals. Art, the Conference decided, 'might be truly illustrative of the American way of living', and the exchange of artists as citizen-subjects conducive to better cultural and political relations ¹⁰⁶ . Also talked about at the Conference was the value of photographic collections, motion pictures and radio ¹⁰⁷ .

This Conference also marks the point of an assertion of the necessary, but also necessarily limited role of Government in improving relations between nation-States:

'Mr. Berle stated that although artistic and intellectual activities in the US had been traditionally the province of private groups a government agency which can assist and co-ordinate the intellectual activities has become almost as necessary' 108

Acting as a 'clearing house' then, the Department of Cultural Relations had 'facilitated' the presentation of three book exhibitions in South America in December 1939. According to the document, thirty private United States publishers had taken part and the Department of Cultural Relations had provided the necessary 'diplomatic facilities'. Once again, the State presents itself here as passive 'partner' and observer, allowing the 'free-flow'

between 'free' citizens. As a necessary condition for such flowing, however, the State is in fact essential and active in this production of cultural relations between nations ¹⁰⁹ .

Chairman Charrington also stressed that it was not the Department's intention to limit itself to the western hemisphere, but that 'first major attention' had been given to links with the American republics ¹¹⁰ . Francis H. Taylor, director of the Worcester Museum, suggested that 'the best way of showing the history of the American people was to produce a chart containing title pages of great books, portraits of the great writers and historians' ¹¹¹ . Miss Louise Benney, from the Committee On The Theme For The New York World Fair, suggested that the Fair would be an excellent vehicle for representing 'the American way of living' to both a North and Latin American audience ¹¹² . A slightly sour note was recorded from the critic Royal Cortissoz, the art editor of the New York Herald Tribune, who thought that the use of motion pictures and radio, not to mention 'American refrigerators and gas ranges', was not a sufficiently dignified method of introducing foreigners to the best elements of American culture ¹¹³ .

Exhibitions of works concerned with improving Inter-American relations had already taken place by February 1940, with, for instance, Rainey Bennett's Venezuela exhibition at the Downtown Gallery in New York City ¹¹⁴ . The Daily Worker two years earlier, had reviewed motion pictures sponsored by two hundred agencies aimed at showing the 'cultural, economic and political life of the

United States' ¹¹⁵ . The Art Digest considered the Latin American art exhibition held at the Riverside Museum in the summer of 1939 'an important step in the much coveted Pan-American interchange of culture and commerce' and recommended it be repeated the following year ¹¹⁶ . In 1940 Roosevelt appointed Nelson. A. Rockefeller to the position of co-ordinator for cultural and commercial relations with Latin American countries and the sub-committee on art became a function of the State's strategic operation aimed at securing the economic and political hegemony of the United States. As has been shown, Rockefeller's role was to judiciously alternate between Vice-President of the Nation and President of that cultural-diplomatic institution, the Museum Of Modern Art in New York ¹¹⁷ .

It is to be concluded from this final re-orientation of the State function of cultural practices and of the deployment of the 'artist' as citizen, that the State had realised a 'cultural-strategic' mechanism which the Federal Art Project had struggled to develop and articulate ¹¹⁸ . It is not possible to reduce these three paradigms with their own particular determinants and conditions to those of the Federal Art Project and the forms which it constructed up to its general demise in 1939. If the Community Art Centre programme was to be scrapped and thousands of murals and easel paintings in federal institutions destroyed,, then what survived and evolved was a technique of establishing power networks and information-gathering and dissemination ¹¹⁹ . This rhizome of State activity-linked and fed apparently

disparate domains and activities ¹²⁰ . Paradoxical as some of these interlockings and negotiations may have been ¹²¹ , their functional importance in the reproduction of U.S. economic and cultural hegemony in the world is undeniable and their development since the Second World War both rapid and comprehensive ¹²² .

One such paradox within this network will be the concern of the next chapter and it seems symptomatic of the New Deal State's conflictual composition and operation. The Conference On Inter-American Relations brought together what might appear to be strange bedfellows: Rene d'Harnoncourt and Stuart Davis, Holger Cahill and Ed Bruce ¹²³ . This condensation of forces and interests might stand for the New Deal State in general and certainly for the conflicts within the Federal Art Project ¹²⁴ . The anti-communism of the Post- Second World War years is prefigured by the activities of the Dies Committee investigating 'Un-American' practices in the late 1930s. This committee was in large part responsible for the abolition of the Federal Theatre Project and for the incitement of hostility against the Federal Art Project which hastened its demise ¹²⁵ . The alliance of forces responsible for the defence and development of the Federal Art Project became, in the very late 1930s, the grounds for its eventual destruction.

Notes To Chapter 6

1. The 'Social' in this sense may be taken to refer to three distinct theoretical and historical objects. Firstly, following Laclau and Mouffe, it denotes the structure of discourses and practices constituting a particular society. This consists of an articulated field of differences fixed in a relatively stable system. 'Relatively' stable because the generation of antagonisms can not be absolutely abolished: 'if... the social only exists as a partial effort for constructing society - that is, an objective and closed system of differences - antagonism, as a witness of the impossibility of a final suture, is the "experience" of the limit of the social', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.125. Secondly, the 'Social' can be taken to mean the legitimating narrative used to justify the expansion of the influence of the interventionist State. Jean Baudrillard can be instructive - to a certain degree - on this point. He enumerates 'urbanisation, concentration, production, work, medicine, education, social security, insurance, etc...' [as] ...the institutions which have sign-posted the "advance of the social", in In The Shadow Of The Silent Majorities (Semiotext(e); New York, 1982), p.65. Thirdly, to historicise Baudrillard's sense, the 'Social' refers to the expansion of the New Deal State in the 1930s, the introduction of welfare, housing and work-creation schemes, etc.
2. See State, Power, Socialism, p.58.
3. Laclau and Mouffe, op cit., 'any discourse is considered as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre', p.112.
4. Instructive on this point is Raymond Williams, '...the State always has this double sense: it is not only the central organ of power, but of display - indeed often specifically the public pomp of a particular social order. You don't have to look far in any particular society to see a culture which is not recognised as a cultural policy or an arts policy, but which is culturally concerned with display', in 'Reflections On The State And The Cultural Arena', in Culture And The State (I.C.A.; London, 1984), p.3.
5. This is meant both discursively and physically. In a sense, this itself is a false opposition because the discourse of Nation articulates the physical as a 'moment' in the discourse. The sign 'US' constitutes a discursive '...formation [which] manages to signify itself (that is, to constitute itself as such) only by transforming the limits into frontiers, by constituting a chain of equivalences which constructs what is beyond the limits as that which is not. It is only through negativity, division and antagonism that a formation can constitute itself as a totalising horizon', Laclau and Mouffe, op cit., p.144. Also, see Chapter 5, note 6.
6. See Chapter 5, note 4. It is interesting to compare, in relation to this, recent work by Gilles Deleuze and

- Felix Guattari. They use the concept of 'territorialisation' and stress its dynamic. For them, 'Civilised modern societies are defined by processes of decoding and deterritorialisation. But what they deterritorialise with one hand, they reterritorialise with the other', in The Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism And Schizophrenia (Athlone Press; London, 1984), p.257. The State can be defined as a conglomerate territorialiser.
7. For a brief discussion of the Chicago Fair, see Alan Trachtenberg, op cit., p.11-17. Michael Hore wrote to Cahill, December 4th 1935: 'Would you like to attend a dinner to discuss certain concrete aspects of the World's Fair of 1939? Lately there has been considerable discussion on this subject. Unless there is a strong collective action on the part of the liberals in this city, New York will find itself saddled with a group of anachronistic buildings in no way expressing the contemporary life of the country but merely constituting a reaction to the Chicago Fair'. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 8. Cahill to Hore, December 21st 1935. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 9. In The Nina Collier papers - NDA/7/AAA and marked confidential. This was apparently a proposal submitted by the committee formed at the City Club on December 11th 1935. The members included Lewis Mumford, Gilbert Rhodes, Louise Benney and Henry Wright.
 10. O'Connor's essay 'The Usable Future: The Role Of Fantasy In The Promotion Of A Consumer Society For Art' is taken from Helen A. Harrison (ed.) Dawn Of A New Day: The New York World Fair Of 1939-40 (Queens Museum - New York University Press; New York, 1980), pp.57-71.
 11. NDA/7/AAA.
 12. NDA/7/AAA. The document continued: 'For the first time in American history New York will present to the world a vivid and integrated expression on the expanding American Scene'.
 13. NDA/7/AAA.
 14. NDA/7/AAA. It went on: 'Mere mechanical progress is no longer an adequate or practical theme for a world fair. We must demonstrate the super-civilisation that is based on the swift work of machines, not on the arduous toil of men'.
 15. NDA/7/AAA.
 16. NDA/7/AAA.
 17. NDA/7/AAA.
 18. NDA/7/AAA.
 19. NDA/7/AAA. Housing, the document said, will 'demonstrate large scale planning in towns and community units. It should present the latest advances in prefabrication of houses and parts of houses.' Education is 'pure, science, a field of human endeavour permeating all phases of life, [and] should have here a magnified opportunity to dramatise its services to humanity'. Under Recreation, the public must be taught 'how to play'.
 20. See Chapter 3. Also Thomas Crow, 'Modernism And Mass Culture In The Visual Arts', in Francis Frascina (ed.)

- Pollock And After: The Critical Debate, pp.233-266.
21. NDA/7/AAA.
 22. NDA/7/AAA.
 23. The State must represent itself, as it must represent 'the People/Nation': as free from conflict and dissension. The modern State still references the principle of the 'organic body of the Sovereign' in 'its' execution of Law, Order and War. See Michel Foucault, Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison, pp.28-31.
 24. If we take the commodity as 'the sign of capitalism', signifying the four alienations - (1) worker from product, (2) worker from labour process, (3) worker from own essence and (4) worker from other worker - the negation of species being (K. Marx The Economic And Philosophical Manuscripts Of 1844, International Publishers; New York, 1982) especially 'Estranged Labour', pp.106-119) we can say that the attempt to remove artists and their labour/product from the determinations of commodity production, was the attempt to remove the social and economic antagonisms endemic to capitalist society.
 25. See note 10. According to O'Connor 'the Fair was one of the most flexible devices available to industry by which the nation's "usable future" could be projected upon the American imagination', p.57.
 26. *ibid.* 'At Flushing Meadow in the last years of the 1930s a fantasy of an idealised past was rejected for a fantasy of the planned future', p.58. Interestingly, Baudrillard talks of 'the Social' as 'one of the ways of balancing the exchanges between the individual and his environment, the social as functional eco-system, homeostasis and superbiology of the species - no longer even a structure, but a substance: the cordial and high protein anonymity of a nutritious substance', In The Shadow Of The Silent Majorities, p.76.
 27. O'Connor, *op cit.*, p.61. Slum clearance also featured as a concern of those involved with organising the Fair. Mr. Stokes, head of the Municipal Art Commission hoped 'to see the fair leave a legacy of useful beauty. Much of the city planning the commission has approved should be completed before the Fair draws the provincials to the metropolis...In the matter of housing it is felt that not only New York, but all other American cities are behind the large municipalities of Europe...' HC/1107/AAA.
 28. See Jean Francois Lyotard The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge (Manchester University Press, 1984). According to Lyotard, metanarratives act as legitimating criteria for knowledge production and utilisation. A metanarrative thus 'guarantees' the knowledge and value of science-practice. As we have seen with the New Deal and the New York World Fair, what Lyotard calls a metanarrative of 'performativity' has been employed. This can be identified as a 'philosophy of efficiency' (p.54); 'the system seems to be a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanising it in order to rehumanise it at a different level of normative capacity. The techno-

crats declare they cannot trust what society designates as its needs; they "know" that society cannot know its own needs since they are not variables independent of the new technologies' (p.63). There are also what Lyotard called 'emancipatory meta-narratives'; in America in the late 1930s this can be said to have consisted of the 'democratic imaginary' articulated to the Roosevelt Administration and the New Deal State. With discourses around the New York World Fair, it seems that performativity had become itself an emancipatory discourse.

29. In O'Connor, op cit., p.59.
30. *ibid.*, p.61.
31. *ibid.* O'Connor continues 'The latent fascism of the designers, which allowed their compromises to coexist with their visions, also fell in all too neatly with the political thinking of the optimistic capitalists of the day, who had yet to realise the danger brewing in Germany and Italy and were childishly fascinated by the psychological power of a modernised Greco-Roman empire', p.61.
32. Laclau and Mouffe argue that the attempt to absolutely fix or suture the meanings in an hegemonic discourse is doomed to failure because of a necessary 'surplus of meaning' which constitutes the 'field of discursivity', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, p.111. Systems of meaning can only ever be relatively stable and are ultimately precarious, p.128: 'The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meanings; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity', p.113.
33. The architecture at the Fair included three particular structures, called The Trylon (630 feet high, a three sided gateway), The Perisphere (180 feet wide globe) and The Hericline (950 feet long spiral incline). These forms, according to O'Connor, 'lent their power and drama to the fantasy in much the same way as did the pylons, searchlight domes, serried phalanxes, martial anthems and prophetic orations, which a few years earlier, had mesmerised the German nation to buy the fantasy of a thousands year fate', p.62. The theme song of the Fair contained an apparently unintentional reference to Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel: 'We're the rising tide come from far and wide/ Marching side by side on our way/ For a brave new world/Tomorrow's world/That we shall build today', p.62.
34. Mentioned in the American Magazine Of Art May 1939; vol.xxxii, no.5, p.317.
35. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 7 and the Conclusion.
36. O'Connor, op cit., p.63.
37. Howard Devree 'Art And Democracy', American Magazine Of Art May 1939; vol.xxxii, no.5: 'Democracy in government has turned out to be a system of checks and balances. And democracy in art? A member of the

New York Jury said to me the other day: 'We have achieved a mean - a dead level' A chastened epitaph on a democratic effort'.

38. According to a Mr. Peixotto, in a letter dated 'summer 1936', 'all of us are looking forward to the World Fair in Queens in 1939. I hope the World Fair people will see the need for a mural painting from the beginning, instead of dragging it in at the end'. EMCC/D370/AAA. In a letter from Julius Davidson to Lawrence C. Morris, April 1st 1939, it was thought that the financial accomplishments of the Federal Art Project could be shown at the New York World Fair. FAP/DC54/AAA. Art Digest June 1940; vol.xiv, no.16 said 'If the Federal Art Project'ever needed a diploma to justify its existence, that certificate of accomplishment may now be viewed at the New York World Fair, materialised in the exhibition that project artists have installed in the Contemporary American Art Galleries. Simply stated, it is a good show, possessing a high aesthetic level and more frequent peaks of individual achievement than last year's lamented consensus of four hundred jurors who sought to demonstrate 'Art In A Democracy' and ended with a dull and vapid compromise on mediocrity... It might be a good idea to invite the four hundred odd Congressmen who annually argue the merits of the Government in art, to make a tour of the project's galleries...but a fraction of the cost of a single battleships and the results are far more enduring'.
39. For addiscussion of the Roosevelt Coalition and the dissolution it suffered, see David Milton The Politics Of US Labor: From The Great Depression To The New Deal, Chapter 5, pp.106-120. 'The Limits Of Industrial Unionism Under The New Deal', and Chapter 7, pp.139-153 'War Consolidates The Great Bargain'. He says: 'Roosevelt was required to lurch from left to right. The center-left coalition was weakened after the 1938 elections when Mauvy Maverick of Texas and other New Deal progressives lost their seats in Congress. Philip LaFollette was defeated in Wisconsin, Murphy and Earl lost their governorships in Michigan and Pennsylvania, and Republicans doubled their strength in the House Of Representatives from 88 to 170 while adding 8 new seats in the Senate', pp.139-140.
40. HC/1107/AAA.
41. *ibid.*
42. This is discussed in Chapter 7.
43. The national administration of the Federal Art Project, as part of the Works Progress Administration, was disbanded and the project ran by separate states which had to be funded by local organisations. The question of whether this change was paradoxical because the State was apparently depriving itself of a significant means of legitimation depends on (a) whether the State is constructed as a simple 'instrument' of class rule and (b) whether the State can be understood as an 'it' at all. Following Poulantzas, the State should be properly seen as a specific material condensation of a set of forces in struggle in society as a whole.
44. editorial, Art Digest December 1939; vol.xiv, no.5:

- 'With final attendance figures topping the million and a half, San Francisco Golden Gate Fine Arts Exhibition goes down in history as the greatest box office attraction in the annals of art showmanship. Its net paid total of 1,563,785 visitors beats by more than double the combined attendance figures for the New York World Fair art shows. New York 'Masterpieces Of Art' show drew 440,000 and the Contemporary American Art show clicked for 292,000 - total 723,000'
45. *ibid.* 'It was probably a question of finer quality, better planning and keener art appreciation in the West'.
 46. Art Digest's lurch to the right is discussed in Chapter 7 and the Conclusion.
 47. In Helen A. Harrison 'Towards A "Fit Plastic Language": Six Muralsists At The New York World Fair', in Helen A. Harrison (ed.) Dawn Of A New Day: The New York World Fair Of 1939-40, pp.19-25.
 48. *ibid.* 'It was Cahill's plan to combine the activities of all the WPA cultural projects under one roof, modelled on a center of the type the FAP was successfully operating in numerous urban and rural areas', p.20.
 49. *ibid.*
 50. *ibid.*
 51. *ibid.*
 52. See Chapter 4.
 53. Philip Guston's Maintaining America's Skills (illus.16) consisted of four monumental figures: an engineer builder; a scientist with a microscope; a surveyor and a construction worker with a trowel. It served to personify the broad range of productive activities funded by the WPA and, perhaps, at this stage in the growth of opposition to the Roosevelt Administration, those which were considered most valuable by a hostile Congress and corporate lobby turning against what it regarded as the controversial aspects of the Administrations work relief schemes. According to an official Federal Art Project account of the mural, Guston's work conveyed two ideas: One 'that the WPA provides employment and rehabilitation; Two, that it makes important contributions to the well-being of the community', in EMCC/D374/AAA. Seymour Fogel's Relation Of WPA To Rehabilitation (illus.17), represented, according to the Federal Art Project's own account, the benefits which the Administration had provided for the unemployed, 'by giving them the means and the opportunity for productive labor', in EMCC/D374/AAA. The starvation and hopelessness before the New Deal had been transformed into 'self-support' and 'self-reliance'. Recreational Activities Of The WPA (illus.18) was painted by the federal artist Ryah Ludins and was seen by the Project as 'presenting a gay and colorful picture of children's recreation under the sponsorship of the WPA.', EMCC/D374/AAA. Eric Mose depicted Building And Construction (illus.19) This included a representation of the planned North Beach Airport and the Jacob Ruis Park, both built by the WPA in the late 1930s. The reproduction of the Federal Art Project discourse on the importance of the family,

as a root of citizenship in the construction of the Nation, occurred with its account of Louis Ross' WPA Services To The Community. Again, the WPA, as representative of the benevolent State, functions as provider for the individual citizen. It 'presents the benefits of the Federal Art Project as related to the life cycle of man from birth to maturity. To the right is shown the family, which ultimately benefits from all WPA services', in EMCC/D374/AAA. Other murals included Cultural Activities Of The WPA by Anton Refregier and Community Activities by Ruth Reeves. In the Medicine And Public Health Building, Lishinsky and Block painted four panels called The History Of Medicine, in a style which Harrison calls 'retardataire semi-abstract cubist montage style popularised by T.H. Benton and Diego Rivera'. Willem deKooning, Arshile Gorky and Michael Loew also painted murals at the Fair.

54. The implications of this development were extensive and are linked, as has been shown, with the role of the CIA and the Office of Inter-American Affairs in the funding and support of post-war American abstract painting. Similarly, it involves the growing imbrication of corporate art institutions in the mechanisms and functions of the State. For a collection of articles which have dealt with this, see Francis Frascina (ed.) Pollock And After: The Critical Debate, Section II. For a discussion of the role of corporations in the growth of the US economy, see C. Wright Mills The Power Elite (Oxford University Press, New York, 1959). 'Between 1940 and 1944, some 175 billion dollars worth of prime supply contracts - the key to the control of the nation's means of production - were given to private corporations. A full two thirds of this went to the top one hundred corporations - in fact, almost one third went to ten private corporations. These companies then made money by selling what they had produced to the government... It had cost some 40 billion dollars to build all the manufacturing facilities existing in the United States in 1939. By 1945, an additional 26 billion dollars worth of high quality new plant and equipment had been added - two thirds of it paid for directly from government funds', pp.100-101.
55. *ibid.*, see Chapter 7 'The Corporate Rich', pp.147-170.
56. A trajectory may be plotted for the deployment of cultural strategies by the State from the Visible (Federal Art Project, New York World Fair) to the invisible (the CIA, the Office Of Inter-American Affairs, etc).
57. For the concept of 'paradigm' and the distinction between 'normal' and 'revolutionary' science, see T.S. Kuhn The Structure Of Scientific Revolutions (University Of Chicago Press, 1962). It is useful to think of the State's involvement with cultural strategies as discontinuous and strategic: a set of paradigms: 'display-paradigm'; 'covert-paradigm'.
58. For the concept of 'resection', see Gilles Deleuze, an interesting essay called 'Politics' in On The Line,

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Semiotext(e); New York, 1983), especially pp.69-115. In a metaphor that discusses political discourse as a net-like structure where subject-positions are constituted at the points of the meeting of various lines as they intersect each other, it is possible to see an homology with Laclau and Mouffe's concept of 'articulation' ('reticulation') and 'nodal point' ('intersection'). According to Deleuze, 'the segments stem from binary machines, which are necessarily very diverse. Binary machines of social classes, sexes (men/women), ages (child/adult), races (black/white), sectors (public/private) and subjectivisations ('ours'/'not ours'). These binary machines grow more complex as they intersect or collide with one another, confront each other and cut us up in every direction. They are dichotomising rather than dualistic...', p.77. The State's constructs a reticulation, a series of pathways and intersections, involving cultural 'lines' (institutions, artists, artworks, projects). These intersections though relatively stable are also dynamic and the changes from one net to another is, therefore, an intersection which is resected.

59. See Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.105-145.
60. See note 43.
61. In Art As A Function Of Government, produced by the Supervisors Association Of The WPA Federal Art Project, 1937, p.1.
62. Federal Art Project statement. FAP/DC57/AAA. This continues 'Obviously, any one of the foregoing activities would be a major undertaking for any private enterprise...Their totality would be impossible by other than a Government agency...
[Federal Art Project] production has been carefully restricted from conflicting with private enterprise'.
63. For a discussion of this, see Lloyd C. Gardner 'The New Deal, New Frontiers, And The Cold War: A Re-examination Of American Expansion 1933-45' in David Horowitz Corporations And The Cold War (Monthly Review Press; New York, 1969), pp.105-142.
64. It is not known whether anything became of the idea. It does demonstrate that Cahill had planned new and different functions for the Federal Art Project. It marks one departure from the 'display paradigm' and moves some way toward a more covert activity.
65. See Chapter 7.
66. Cahill may have been aware, as T.S. Eliot said, that 'the effective culture is that which is directing the activities of those who are manipulating what they call culture', Notes Towards The Definition Of Culture (Faber & Faber; London, 1948), p.107.
67. Lecture. FVOC/1086/AAA. 'Regional celebrations are an established part of American life...There is a nationwide ready-made audience available not once, on some isolated occasion, but regularly, every year'.
68. *ibid.*
69. *ibid.* 'Complete survey of any selected region,

- supplemental to survey already made, of periodically recurring fiestas, pageants, fairs, etc and analysed as to date, attendance, nature of the events, participation in the events, celebration...'
70. *ibid.* It continues 'I think it would be found that a unified whole² could be evolved from the heterogeneity of these scattered but related celebrations, but the primary aim of the research-author group would be to utilise the particular intrinsic values of each celebration...'
 71. *ibid.*
 72. *ibid.*
 73. *ibid.* 'Working in the central office with those persons who were writing and preparing the material, the directors would know before they went into the field the particularities of each celebration which they undertook'.
 74. *ibid.*
 75. For an interesting discussion of the distinction between 'local communities' and the definition/experience of the Nation, see Raymond Williams The Year 2000 (Pantheon; New York, 1983), 'The Culture Of Nations', pp.177-199.
 76. Cahill's lecture continues: 'performance of these rehearsal units might be given independently of the annual event. These rehearsals and performances will of course sustain and accelerate interest in the annual event and they will also afford the continuity demanded by the program. Towards the end of the rehearsal periods, a director or directors from the central bureau would arrive and, by no means blindly, because these directors will be well-informed of what was intended to be accomplished in each particular celebration, take over the final preparations.'
 77. *ibid.*
 78. *ibid.* Cahill gives the 'authentic' examples of 'The Jumping Frog Jubilee' taken from Mark Twain's story and the rodeo which 'offers infinite pageantry elements'.
 79. *ibid.*
 80. *ibid.*
 81. There existed an implicit criticism of urban living in Cahill's concern to foster the regional and its authentic cultural practices. It may be instructive to compare this with Stuart Chase's book Mexico: A Study Of Two Americas, where the isolated village of Tepoztlan in Mexico is contrasted with urban North American society. Tepoztlan 'was a community free of the business cycle and mechanical civilisation, an "organic breathing entity". While it had no machines, it was impossible for the Mexicans to produce the humblest thing without form of design. Time was measured by the sun, not by clocks. The clock was "perhaps the most tyrannical engine ever invented". To live beyond its lash is an experience in liberty which comes to few citizens of the machine age'. Quoted in Arthur A. Ekirsch Ideologies And Utopias: The Impact Of The New Deal Upon American Thought, p.187.

82. No date. FAP/DC56/AAA.
83. *ibid.*.
84. The term's function within discourse is to reference an extra- or non- discursive object which pre-exists discourse. In other words, it is a discursive construct which attempts to constitute the object 'community' in a relation of exteriority to discourse. Rather like in Marxist theory when the 'economy' is constructed as an 'object', a referent which determines all discourse (qua superstructure). However, also like in Marxist theory, different discourses (e.g. State Monopoly Capitalist theory; State Derivationist theory, etc) offer competing referents within their own discourses. Similarly, the referent 'community' in the late 1930s in the US has a number of different formulations ('New Deal community', 'Laissez Faire community', 'Ku Klux Klan community', etc).
85. In one sense, the New Deal always seemed to be promising and not delivering. By 1938, the upturn in the economy had not arrived and, in fact, signs existed that the economy might slump again. A broad consensus seems to exist which believes that re-armament was overwhelmingly responsible for the economic recovery in the early 1940s. See Frank Freidel The New Deal In Historical Perspective (The American Historical Association; Washington, 1959).
86. This is discussed in Chapter 7.
87. FAP/DC56/AAA.
88. *ibid.*.
89. *ibid.*.
90. *ibid.*.
91. *ibid.*.
92. *ibid.*. 'It would be a fine gift to the nation if this reservoir of knowledge and experience could be directed to flow freely into action'.
93. The panel also included messrs. Dornbush, Ray, Case and Melvin.
94. See Chapter 3.
95. FAP/DC56/AAA.
96. *ibid.*.
97. *ibid.*.
98. *ibid.*. 'Instead of having a technical supervisor for Federal Music and another technical supervisor for recreation and educational music, the Federal Music Supervisor would service all three elements of the program. The Federal Art Supervisor would serve as technical supervisor for all recreational and educational art and craft for handicraft centers, for museum work, in addition to supervising the work of the federal artists and the art gallery. There should not be two or more technical supervisors on the same level operating in the community on Professional and Service work, except when large employment makes this necessary'.
99. As mentioned, for an account of the TVA devoted to its 'rationalising' potential, see Julian Huxley TVA: Adventure In Planning. This also discusses murals painted specifically for the TVA, p.110. The artist

Minna Citron, employed on the Section Of Painting And Sculpture, in the Treasury, produced two murals for the TVA at the Post Office in Newport, Tennessee. An exhibition of these works was held in October 1940. The catalogue essay contains a poem by Carl Sandburg which exemplifies the 'populist-planning' of the New Deal. The poem is called 'The People, Yes':

'Who can make a poem of the depths of weariness?
 Bringing meaning to those never in the depths?
 Those who order what they please
 When they choose to have it -
 Can they understand that many down under
 Who come home to their wives and children at night
 And night after night as yet too brave and unbroken
 To say "I ache all over"?
 How can a poem deal with production cost
 And leave out definite misery paying
 A permanent price in shattered health and early old age?
 When will the efficiency engineers and the poets
 Get together on a program?'

The catalogue essay continues 'I hope time will answer Mr. Sandburg by telling him that in TVA artists and engineers did "get together on a program".'

100. Alfred M. Bingham, the editor of Common Sense magazine speaking at the Night Of The Centennial Celebration Of Flushing Village; recorded in a speech called 'Art As A Social Function' said: 'instead of this development being a product of great prosperity and well-being, as a natural step to a higher standard of living, it comes to us by the backdoor in the disguise of a hand-out'. EMCC/D374/AAA.
101. For instance, the abolition of the Federal Theatre Project and then the Federal Art Project itself.
102. For a lengthy discussion of this, see Thomas R. Dye's Who's Running America? (Prentice Hall; New Jersey, 1979) and especially 'The Civic Establishment', pp. 112-142, and 'The Cultural Organisations', p.123.
103. Held between October 11-12th 1939. The documentation of the conference is dated January 1940.
104. This list is not exhaustive. It also included: Paul J. Sachs, director of the Fogg Museum; Clarence Ward, Oberlin College; Chauncey Hamlin, President of the Buffalo Museum For Science; Theodore Sizer, Department of Fine Art, Yale University; Paul Manship, President of the National Sculpture Society; Mortimer Borne, United American Artists; Herbert J. Spinden, Brooklyn Museum; Ed Rowan, Section Of Painting And Sculpture; Charles Hoban, director of Motion Picture Project for American Council on Education; Fred A. Whiting, editor of the American Magazine Of Art.
105. See James MacGregor Burns Roosevelt: The Lion And The Fox, pp.252-3.
106. HC/1109/AAA.
107. *ibid.*
108. *ibid.* 'To encourage and strengthen cultural relations and intellectual co-operation between the US and other countries...The Department is interested in extending to every legitimate area in the field of

- cultural relations the co-operation of the government ...It is the view of the Department that in this country the primary responsibility for cultural exchange properly resides with private agencies and institutions and the major function of the division is to act as a clearing house for the activities of private organisations...'
109. Berle continued 'Government had the responsibility of providing annual exchange of two graduate students and one professor between the US and each other 11 nations which ratified the 1936 Convention of the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations'.
 110. *ibid.*.. See also Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock: 'MOMA: The Museum Of Modern Art, New York', Modern Art And Modernism, Broadcast Notes 3, 1984.
 111. Professor Charles R. Morley, Head of Art and Archeology Department, Princeton University, said: 'foreign universities have never developed a systematic study of the history of art as American Universities have. As a result students are beginning to turn to this continent for their training, not only in creative art, but in the history of art...The historical training is the best that the universities can give.'
 112. *ibid.*..'we have in this country no organisation that has as its main objective the organisation and the circulation of exhibits that is financed to do just that.' / She posed the question of / 'whether we want to aim for a co-ordinated exhibition showing the inter-dependence of all these forces in creating our society today...'
 113. *ibid.*..
 114. EMCC/D374/AAA. 'Venezuela: Rainey Bennett, Downtown Gallery, January 23rd - February 10th 1940, 113th West 13th St.' It said: 'On May 13th 1939, Bennett set out to paint his impression of Venezuela, as a commission from Mr. Nelson Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, the latter vastly instrumental in the modernisation [sic] of Venezuela...he was given complete freedom in the choice of material and the treatment of it. He furnished a pictorial record of the old Venezuela with people pursuing old customs; and the new Venezuela, industrialised, mechanised and modernised... It provides convincing proof that American artists today are prepared to meet the challenge of a given task. And it further emphasises the new liaison between art and industry; a liaison of great cultural value to the nation'. Some of the paintings, for which no illustrationseexist, had titles such as Compression Station, Lago Petroleum Company, Stone Breakers, Refining In Process, Cement Holder, Caracas Country Club, Little Boys.
 115. Daily Worker, 'Films For Democracy', Saturday November 26th 1938. '...great masses of the American movie going public look hungrily to the screen for constructive solutions to the problem of unemployment, they want pictures that deal with the menace of fascism, pictures that reaffirm the principles of

- democracy; pictures which do not evade or distort, but tell honestly of labor's struggle for unionisation'.
116. 'Pan-American Exchange', Art Digest December 1939; vol.ix, no.5.
 117. See note 110.
 118. The struggle to perpetuate the Federal Art Project's activities through a Fine Arts Bureau within the State is discussed in Chapter 7.
 119. For a discussion of the destruction of Federal Art Project art works, see Jonathan Harris 'Art, Histories, Politics: The New Deal Art Projects And American Modernism', Ideas And Production 5, Spring 1986.
 120. The concept of the 'rhizome' is discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in the essay 'Rhizome' in On The Line, pp.1-68. The 'rhizome' is opposed to the 'arborescent'. Briefly, an 'arborescent' theory, for example, has a determining feature or origin to which everything is reduced. Marxism, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is highly arborescent: the notion of the 'economic base' (or root, deep structure, etc) which determines all growth from it. In opposition to this, a rhizome is an a-centred system, non-hierarchical: 'Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point with any other point, and none of its features necessarily refers to features of the same kind. It puts into play very different regimes of signs and even states of non-signs. The rhizome doesn't allow itself to be reduced to the One or the Many', p.47. This concept may be a useful way to characterise the network of relations and meeting points which articulated the cultural discourses and practices operating in the late 1930s in America. Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari concentrate on 'America As Rhizome': 'America should be considered a place apart. Obviously it is not exempt from domination by trees and the search for roots. This is evident even in its literature, in the quest for a national identity, and even for a European ancestry or genealogy...Nor are directions the same in America: the East is where the arborescent search and the return to the old world takes place; but the west is rhizomatic, with its Indians without ancestry; its always receding boundaries, its fluid and shifting frontiers', p.43.
 121. For instance, the well-known case in the post-war period of the State's apparently contradictory stance on abstract art. On the one hand Congressman Dondero argued it was 'communistic' (see his speech 'Modern Art Shackled To Communism', 1949, in H.B. Chipp Theories Of Modern Art (University of California Press; Berkeley, 1968, pp.496-500), while simultaneously, covert State agencies were supporting and funding MOMA exhibitions of abstract art as symbols of America's 'democratic' culture.
 122. See Charles Levinson Vodka Cola (Gordon & Cremonesi; London, 1979). This discusses and details the links between the USA and the USSR constructed for mutual economic benefit.
 123. The implications of these alliances are discussed in

Chapter 7.

124. Daniel Aaron discusses the impact of the Popular Front policy in Writers On The Left: 'To champion liberal economic and social legislation was not merely undangerous; it became highly respectable. And after the Communist Party adopted the Popular Front line in 1935, Joseph Freedman observed, one could be simultaneously a Communist and a supporter of FDR and jump on "the sweetest bandwagon in all history...In short, this is the only period in all the world's history when you could be at once and the same time an ardent revolutionary and an arch conservative"', p.271. This situation soon ended.
125. For a history of institutionalised anti-communism in the USA, see The UnAmericans, by Frank J. Donner (Ballantine; New York, 1961).

CHAPTER 7

The End Of The Federal Art Project:
Art, Politics And The State

The previous chapter argued that the cultural strategies deployed by the New Deal State entered a phase of operational modulation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. From the relative stability of the programmes established by the Federal Art Project in 1935 - the Community Art Centre programme, the Index Of American Design and the easel/mural projects - a shift took place in the way cultural administrators conceived of the value and function of the State's intervention into cultural production. This shift was by no means an unproblematic development and involved a set of conflicting positions occupied by a range of administrators differentially located in various sectors of the State. As will be seen, the Federal Art Project discourses characterised in early chapters were superseded in an ensemble of emergent discourses which reconstituted the relation of the State to visual representational practices. This was characterised in the previous chapter as a decisive modulation of function away from a State 'display-orientation' towards a covert surveillance model. It is necessary now to relate this 'local' transition in the operation of one sub-section of the Works Progress Administration to an analysis of the reconstituted political forces active within the formation of the New Deal State in America in the late 1930s.

Central to this perspective is the analysis of the relationship between the State's discourses ¹ on the approaching war and rearmament ², Congressional attacks on the New Deal, growing press hostility to the arts

projects, and the political upheavals on the Left in the United States both in sectors of the State apparatus and in oppositional groupings ³ . The self-confident and assertive discourses produced by the Federal Art Project contrast sharply with the precarious political conditions of their existence and extension. As O'Connor and McKinzie document, virtually from their inauguration in 1935 the arts projects were subject to financial cuts and personnel reductions. With the economic decline in the United States from August 1937, with economic production falling thirty per cent in nine months and employment falling twenty three per cent, the survival of the Roosevelt Administration in toto was in question. As James T. Patterson said:

'whereas the 1933 emergency had been the "Hoover Depression", the new crisis became the "Roosevelt Recession" and New Deal claims returned to haunt the President. The recession was a decisive event in the growth of Congressional conservatism. It confused Roosevelt, making him indecisive and dilatory, it eroded more of the fabulous Roosevelt magic; it destroyed the unity and resolve of the New Deal coalition; and it caused some Congressmen to grope towards a bi-partisan coalition'

4

Within the development of such an anti-Roosevelt formation, both in Congress and in alliance with corporate power groupings ⁵ , a strategic target became the New Deal's work relief schemes, which were taken as indications of both the Government's wastefulness and subversiveness ⁶ . With the demands for rearmament enabling and propelling private corporations and capital to reassert their primacy within the economy and in political discourse ⁷ , the coalition of Republican and right-wing Democrats,

'dollar-a-day' corporate executives, the southern Democrats, generals, admirals and war contractors worked to destabilize the Government's alliance with the C.I.O. labour movement and the Rooseveltian doctrine that work-relief and social security rights were axioms of the American Way ⁸ .

It is within this developing context that press attacks on the Federal Art Project should be located, which involved a wide variety of reasons given to condemn the State's involvement with forms of cultural production. Press attacks tended to concentrate on the production of 'bad art' by federal artists, which was taken as a proof of the futility of the general idea of State involvement. For instance, The Intelligencer, in Wheeling, West Virginia, argued:

'Since the first days of the Works Progress Administration, impecunious artists have been special favorites of Mr. Hopkins' spending program. Artists and so-called artists who have never received a private commission, suddenly found themselves working on murals in public buildings, or instructing classes...At present there are only a half dozen painters classified as portrait painters on the Works Progress Administration roles, but it will be no hard matter to round up hundreds more who think they are artists once the word is passed around...' 9

Apart from the blunt assertion that the Federal Art Project was producing 'bad pictures' without 'adding anything to beauty or aesthetics', Press judgements also centred around popular resistance to the federal artists who, despite the Project's persistent declarations of their communal ontology, appeared alien and ignorant of local knowledges and traditions ¹⁰ . According to the

Standard Times, New Bedford, Massachusetts, this type of criticism was usual. Of a mural in the post office of a Connecticut town, the people said that the represented geography 'was all wrong' ¹¹ . Further more, in Salisbury:

'the criticism is that the artist does not appear to be familiar with early American history and has entirely ignored our photos which we provided to assist him' ¹²

This instance of criticism does however seem complicit with the Federal Art Project discourse which constructed its activities as a 'public service': the subject-position from which the criticism is articulated is that of 'dissatisfied consumer', a position which leaves intact the established 'service relation' between State and Citizen. Similarly, with letters written to the Federal Art Project or to the Works Progress Administration, the claim is made that the Project has abrogated its promise to provide 'good art'. Frederick B. Graham, principle of a high school, thought the paintings that his school received were mediocre: 'the writer is wholly in favor of twenty per cent or larger cut in the relief rolls of this project...the sooner such projects are ended the more satisfactory it will be for many of us' ¹³ . In 1938 and 1939 this complaint is often coupled to an accusation that communist agents were at work in the Federal Art Project: the artist becomes, in some versions, a shiftless parasite, a bad painter and a political subversive. A. Harris wrote to Roosevelt himself: 'I am highly delighted at your recent order to lay off 1500 workers on the Federal Art Project in New York City. It is about time

something was done to rid us of these parasites - for that is what they are and nothing else...The art projects are nothing but a hot bed of communists, with at least seventy five per cent of those holding WPA art project jobs active members of the Communist Party' ¹⁴ . Five people wrote to Cahill in September 1938 saying that ninety nine per cent of the artists were 'lazy, free-thinking...communists and know they have a soft option on the WPA art project' ¹⁵ . They called for a complete purge of all the WPA art projects, especially the Federal Art Project, and justified this partly on the grounds that the artists could not get 'real jobs in the business world' ¹⁶ and that their irregular work hours (a sign of their irregular work) enabled them to exploit the State's generosity ¹⁷ .

Clearly it is the case that Federal Art Project discourses on the communal organisation of artistic production - its integral status as 'valid social activity' - together with the critique of the contemporary alienation of both artist and art commodity in industrial capitalism, had not convinced ¹⁸ . What persisted and was increasingly rearticulated was exactly the discursive antagonism between the subject-position 'artist' and 'worker-citizen', along with an antagonism between a conception of authentic 'free labour' in a capitalist society and an inauthentic 'State-directed labour' considered essentially an impossible, 'unreal' proposition ¹⁹ .

LEGISLATING FOR STATE CULTURE: THE FINE ART BILLS

The changes in the organisation and size of the arts projects, from late 1939 to the complete ending of the Federal Art Project in 1943, were brought about through Congress hostility to any Works Progress Administration relief scheme and especially those involving what was regarded as 'unproductive' labour. Annual changes in the financial appropriations budget brought large reductions in the scale of the national operation of the Federal Art Project ²⁰ . The legitimacy of the State's role in cultural production was thus never finally or absolutely established, either in Congress or outside. This issue of legitimacy, involving some general recognition of the rightness of a particular idea or activity, rather than an empirical or partial judgement on a detail, became the basis for Congress discussion of the bills which were introduced into the House in order to institute a permanent Bureau Of Fine Arts in the Federal State. These moves came about at the very time when the survival of the Federal Art Project was being increasingly threatened. Like the presence of the Project at the New York World Fair, the bills designed to constitute a Department of Art emerged as strategic attempts to defend and stabilize what the Works Progress Administration had engendered. Thus the bills represented a defensive rather than an offensive or assertive action, in the political and economic conjuncture of 1938 and 1939 ²¹ .

When the Federal Art Project assistant administrator

Thomas C. Parker submitted a statement on behalf of the Project, to be incorporated into William I. Sirovich's Fine Art Bill, in early 1938, the employment on the national Project had fallen from a high of 5300 in June 1936 to 3650 in January 1938 ²². Sirovich's bill aimed at creating a Department of Science, Art and Literature which would co-ordinate the functions of a variety of State activities including the Patents Office, the Copyright Office, the Bureau Of Standards, the Commission Of Fine Arts, the Office Of Education, the Bureau Of Mines and the Weather Bureau ²³. In this sense, the bill represented the extension of the terrain of legitimate and necessary State functions and in so doing mobilised a discourse on services and provision already well-developed and articulated in both Federal Art Project discourses and those of other New Deal agencies, notably the Tennessee Valley Authority. Sirovich's bill argued that the Government had a responsibility:

'to encourage the development in our country of cultural institutions as an important and integral part of our national life and history' 24

Contemporaneous with the submission of his bill, Congressmen Coffee and Pepper had constructed another motion calling for the establishment of a permanent Bureau Of Fine Arts in the State. The wording of this bill used the Federal Art Project as evidence for the necessity and value of such a bureau. Though under attack from both Congress and sections of the Press, the Federal Art Project had proved:

'conclusively that their exists in the United States the potentialities for a great and flourishing culture which will, if properly developed, make our country as greater Nation, and render upon our people as a whole the occasion to exercise with democratic equity their cultural aspirations! 25

Making use of the Federal Art Project's account of the people's cultural deprivation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as its critique of the conditions of artistic production in both laissez faire and monopoly capitalism, the motion cited the Federal Art Project as the engine of the revolution that had radically democratised and decentralised art and rejoined both artist and art to the lives of the people ²⁶ . Articulating into a 'One-Nation' discourse the 'fine contributions of the negro', the traditional forms of folk art and the rural community, the Federal Art Project had nurtured 'an indāgenous growth and direction for culture of invaluable import for the nation as a whole' ²⁷ . The Government's role in the maintenance of this development was thus 'an obligation' and a 'social necessity' vital to democracy and the general welfare of the people.

SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION FOR THE BILLS: STATE LEGITIMATION

Both support and opposition to the bills was vociferous: it condensed the issue not only of the legitimacy of the State's intervention into a 'free economy' to offset the chronic effects of a capitalist system in recession, but also of how the extension of the size and penetration of the State's activities might permanently reshape the

national culture and identity. Support came from many groups, individuals and organisations, some established solely to work as pressure groups for the passing of the bills. Again, this demonstrated the recognition that the threats to the Federal Art Project caused by annual Congressional wrangling over finances and employment quotas could only be removed if the projects were made permanent parts of the State, rather than subsistent ad hoc measures. Local 1019, A.F.L. affiliated American Federation Of Government Employees, wrote to Roosevelt and protested that the reorganisation of the Federal Art Project on a state-wide basis in 1939, jeopardised 'the growth and encouragement of the cultural life of the Nation' ²⁸ . A need existed, therefore, 'for permanent art programs in the form of a National Academy Of Arts' ²⁹ . Supported by the American Artists' Congress (actually written into its constitution), the Artists' Union and a host of other groupings, the bill would transfer all the functions previously exercised by the Federal Art Project to the Bureau Of Fine Arts under an appointed Commissioner. The C.I.O., at their conference at Atlantic City in October 1937 passed a motion of support arguing that such a move was 'consistent with democratic government' ³⁰ .

According to Lawrence Drake, from the Permanent Project Committee, in a letter to Harry Hopkins, the Bureau was necessary because capitalism was congenitally incapable of providing support for the production of art in America. A thing radically unlike commodities, Art was a resolver of social antagonisms and free from the tyranny of the exchange value relation which made all other objects

equivalent:

'it is alright to sell rubber tires...
but not a painting...Here again be it
emphasised that the post-war world
will be bled white by passions, pre-
judices and hate. Art will be the
tonic therapy for the spiritually ill
and the convalescent' 31

Similarly, the critic Philippa Whiting had argued as far back as 1935 in the American Magazine Of Art that the welfare of artists would not be ensured simply by the end of the depression: the American artist had never had a wide dependable market and never would. Long-term planning was required ³² . Although the Works Progress Administration had provided some short-term, if in-adequate relief, a democratic society required the State's active and systematic legislated involvement with the production of art and the dissemination of culture to the people. What was at stake, according to the Artists' Union, was the future 'of a popular mass culture' ³³ . With the introduction of Coffee's bill in August 1937, the merging of this with Pepper's motion and later, in 1938, the combining of their bill with Sirovich's, it becomes obvious that what was at stake was the defence and extension of the Left's conception of what the New Deal was supposed to be achieving. Roosevelt's strident populism and attacks on 'economic royalism' - differentially represented in the various agencies the Government established from 1933 onwards and subject to internal antagonisms between State personnel - was to be tested in the struggle over the Fine Art bills and the arguments over the legitimate functions of the State which they engendered ³⁴ .

Opposition to the bills took the form of refutations of many of the arguments constructed by those in favour of a Bureau Of Fine Arts. Charles Burchfield, in a letter to the American Magazine Of Art, declared that 'emergencies' such as the Depression, were always temporary and that therefore so were the Government art projects. 'We can forget about a Fine Arts Ministry', Burchfield said ³⁵ . This argument was then linked to a discussion about the legitimate role of the State in American society through an articulation of traditional laissez faire individualism. Allan Tucker, in writing to the American Magazine Of Art, was 'opposed to government interference with the activities of the individual except where absolutely necessary' ³⁶ . 'Art' and 'artistic production' was then constructed as that specific, atypical and precious activity where the maintenance of this freedom was even more necessary. This persistent theme in the arguments of those opposed to a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts, was a measure of the failure of the Federal Art Project to convince the citizenry of culture's integral role and relation to the Nation: 'In art, such interference is worse than elsewhere for art is only made by an untrammelled individual' ³⁷ . In a similar vein, the editor of Art Digest, Peyton Boswell, argued that that the demand for large-scale government support for art in the form of an arts bill was 'probably the most controversial subject in American art circles today, transcending all "isms", all factions'. Undecided generally about the validity of the State's role in emergency expenditure on subsidizing unemployed workers, Boswell quoted the art critic H.L. Duncan who believed that artists still held to

'that old belief that the world owed these bright lights a living and should be mighty glad to pay up' ³⁸ . This proposition was also linked to the 'disgruntled consumer' argument, which mourned the mountains of dross already produced and which feared the threat of more to come. According to the Oregonian, the Works Progress Administration cultural projects had been as worthy as the pick and shovel projects, but there was nothing to suggest that the achievements had been sufficient to justify the campaign to create a permanent art department in the Federal government ³⁹ . The musical conductor D. R. Damrosch opposed such a bureau as encouraging mediocrity and giving employment to those 'who are not worthy of it under that category' ⁴⁰ . The concept of 'good art' as an unproblematically 'aesthetic' issue and the concomitant concept of the 'authentic' producer of such an art, steadily re-emerges in the mounting attack on the Fine Art bills ⁴¹ .

In an article entitled 'Freedom Of Expression', Nathaniel Pousette-Dart articulated the attempts to create a Fine Art Bureau with the 'totalitarian' aims of some individuals and groups in the United States. These shadowy figures, at this stage not identified as specifically communist or fascist, 'would like to saddle American art with one definite style'. This might be 'academic', 'realistic' or even 'non-objective', but the choice of any style in particular would destroy the 'freedom of expression' no longer possible in Germany and Italy. According to Pousette-Dart, the Coffee-Pepper bill left the door 'wide open for dictatorship' because there was to

be no limitation on the term of office of the administrator: any permanent bureau must ensure first of all the artists' right to freedom of expression ⁴² . The New York Times similarly argued, though more forcibly, that the bills would give power entirely to the unions who controlled the workers, rather than to the Government. The Bureau would institute a 'certain totalitarian concept of federal functions incompatible with the free enterprise system which has heretofore been the particular genius of our democracy' ⁴³ . The New Deal and its function of enabling the reproduction of U.S. capitalism in its most serious structural crisis is forgotten. The groups that formed to oppose the bills ⁴⁴ , both those specifically concerned with art and those not, saw in them an attempt to perpetuate a part of the New Deal which had most directly challenged the dominance and legitimacy of the capitalist system in the United States and which had consistently presented an alternative, if not oppositional, model of the basis for a 'national culture' and a 'national interest' ⁴⁵ . According to Francis Henry Taylor, director of the Worcester Museum, the bills were 'dangerous pieces of class legislation', clothed in the mantle of culture and respectability, yet in reality partial and prejudiced in favour of those with 'self-proclaimed cultural superiority'. He argued that the time for a Federal Art Bureau would come, but that it would occur in a different context, divorced from the issues of employment and relief, and as the considered and carefully-weighted policy of the American people ⁴⁶ .

In the event, the Fine-Art Bill finally submitted to

Congress in June 1938 went the same way as the Federal Art Project was to go over the next two years. Though modified in order to gain more support, the bill was defeated by 195 votes to 35⁴⁷. In a speech which exemplified the hostility dominant in Congress to the State's involvement with culture along the lines of the Federal Art Project, the Republican Dewey Short mockingly announced that all that was needed was that 'twelve million people out of work teach tap dancing so that we can restore prosperity to the poor American farmer or the wage earner'⁴⁸. Congress was not long in turning directly on the Federal Art Project.

THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT UNDER ATTACK

In July 1939 the Works Progress Administration became part of the newly created Federal Works Agency and was renamed the Work Projects Administration⁴⁹. In September Congress voted to end Federal Project One, which had been the collective name for the visual art, music, theatre and writing projects created by the Works Progress Administration. Funds for the Federal Theatre Project were ended, pending the investigation of the newly-formed Dies Committee, constituted by Congress to search out subversive activity, supposedly sponsored by the State through such agencies as the Works Progress Administration⁵⁰. The Federal Art, Music and Writers Projects became part of the Work Projects Administration. Under this new organisation, the Federal Art Project's power was decentralised from Washington and policy formation and implementation passed to a set of

state-wide projects, each required to find local sponsors to initiate and partly fund art projects ⁵¹ . The '18 Month Ruling⁸ was introduced, which struck at the specific relief aspect of the Project's operation - it meant that no worker could be employed by the Project for more than eighteen months in toto. This emphasised more than ever the transitional and temporary nature of the Federal Art Project which Cahill and his closest advisers had fought against from the beginning in 1935.

In opposition to the destruction, both of the Federal Art Project and of the New Deal work-relief agencies in general, was a wide strata of political and cultural groupings which constituted, in a sense, a 'Popular Front' for the defence of the New Deal and the role that the State had performed orppurported to have performed since 1933. This support ranged from individuals, both mobilised by and mobilising themselves, the 'Citizen-Subject' discourse which the Federal Art Project had constructed; Congressional New Dealers who linked theattacks on work-relief with the general reassertion of the power and legitimacy of private capital and big business politics; magazines and newspapers of 'liberal', 'progressive' and 'oppositional' colourings; and various organisations established for the sole purpose of defending the Federal Art Project and increasing its activities. The capacity of the Project to defend itself, through its prime policy-makers, was never fully tested as the Works Progress Administration suppressed the emergence of dissent within and amongst its agencies while Holger Cahill did not intervene when the accusations of communism were levelled

against the Project ⁵² .

SUPPORT FOR THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT: 'DEFENDING A
CULTURAL-DEMOCRACY'

The American Magazine Of Art, a supporter of the Project's activities up to 1940 atleast, defended the Project in the terms which the Project had itself espoused. With the production of:

'every good sculpture, painting, book,
poem, composition that we can produce
[we take] a direct shot at barbarism, 53
a direct help to civilisation'

This anti-fascist inflection was combined with the Federal Art Project doxa of constructing a Unified People: art of this kind 'marks atleast the beginning of cultural homogeneity, of a national mind aware of its own functioning. Broken atleast is the leaden domination of the colonial mind and of European dependency. Of this hard-won maturity, the artist was the first to tell' ⁵⁴ . The construction of this American Art with its specific freedoms and activities had, at this stage, no stylistic prescription: it consisted of a 'democratic eclecticism' which was denied in Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. Non-antagonistic, thus equivalential ⁵⁵ , 'good art' resided not in a particular partial style, but rather in the degree of skill with which any style was instanciated:

'The pure abstractionist, the bitter urban commentator, the man who goes back to the farm may all be equally good and equally bad as artists...The production, fostered by Government, grew enormously. It was and is the most widespread and healthiest growth that American art has ever seen' 56

Similarly, Art Digest considered itself 'unbiased in matters of art' and 'absolutely neutral in matters of politics' ⁵⁷ . The Federal Art Project was worth defending because its value was 'lasting and incontestable' ⁵⁸ . The Nation owed to Roosevelt gratitude as the first President to recognise the value of art as 'an asset worth nurturing' ⁵⁹ .

An exhibition entitled 'Dedicated To The New Deal' was held in 1938 at the ACA Gallery in New York City. It contained Federal Art Project works entitled Good Neighbour Policy, Half-A-Million Protests, The Artist In The New Deal, The Market, WPA, Unemployed, A Worker Again - On WPA, One Third Of A Nation, and The Forgotten Man ⁶⁰ . Again, the question of the aesthetic value of these paintings - for which no illustrations exist - was deferred. Those who worried about the Project producing 'too much bad art' were 'needlessly worried' ⁶¹ . 'Bad art', the catalogue said:

'is an elastic term and history supports the contention that future masterpieces almost invariably are included in that class' ⁶²

But the attacks on the Project which centred on its support for artists who appeared to have no talent were countered. In a poll taken at the New York World Fair, two of the top four prizes went to the Federal Art Project artists Philip Guston and Anton Refregier ⁶³ . The Project became increasingly concerned to advertise the success of its artists in the established art world ⁶⁴ .

Liberal magazines which were not specifically concerned with art often placed their defence of the Federal Art Project in the context of their location in a debate

over the role of the State in managing capitalism. The Nation, in advertising a conference mobilising support to defend the Project ⁶⁵, argued that:

'the Federal Art Projects have become the focal point for the continuing attack on the standards and methods of relief symbolised by the Works Progress Administration. The reason is easy to discover. Nobody loves the artist. Rediculing him or condescending to him is an old American past-time' 66

Similarly, the art critic and historian Elizabeth McCausland, writer of many articles and pamphlets defending the New Deal and the Federal Art Project, described the cuts to the Project budget as aimed at returning the American artist to the status which initially made the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Art Project necessary ⁶⁷. The Italian Renaissance had lasted three centuries, she said, yet 'for the "birth of a Nation" our government allows less than two years' ⁶⁸. And following a similar line of reasoning, the writer George Biddle, in The American Scholar ⁶⁹ argued that the State's encouragement of an authentically American culture - opposed to the influence of French Modernism - was responsible for engendering a culture that was 'democratic, social and anonymous, rather than aristocratic, esthetic and snobbish' ⁷⁰. An old friend of Roosevelt, and an ardent New Dealer, Biddle had preferred the Federal Art Project operation to that of the Treasury projects which had seemed to be in continuity with the aristocratic taste and academic traditions of the nineteenth century ⁷¹. The artists of America, Biddle thought, could never repay what they owed

to Holger Cahill ⁷² . The State, within these accounts, functions as a benevolent facilitator and guardian, enabling artists to produce, rather than constraining them: it makes the question of 'value' dependent on the place of art 'in the lives of the people'. French Modernism as an antagonistic discourse, stands for Aesthetics, Alienation and Otherness. The Federal Art Project banishes Modernism - a prism of social and cultural fragmentation - to the horizon of the American Social.

THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT AND NEW DEAL DEMOCRACY

Mauvy Maverick, a Texas democrat New Dealer, in a Congressional speech as far back as 1936 had related attacks on the Federal Art Project to the Republican Party's general offensive against Roosevelt and the New Deal. Organisations such as the Liberty League (formed in 1936) and the Southern Committee To Uphold The Constitution, were 'false-front organisations' working against the New Deal and for the interests of the munitions corporations ⁷³ . Maverick railed against the 'business aristocracy':

'Mr Mellon goes over to Europe and spends 100,000 dollars on one picture. He goes over there and buys a picture painted four hundred years ago and he brings it back to this country and uses this 100,000 dollar picture for the edification of the US people. My only comment is that I have no objection to foreign masters: they are alright. But, on the other hand, the WPA spends something like 150,000 to 200,000 dollars to put several thousand living native artists to work and save them from starvation'

74

Maverick thus combined an attack on the anti-Roosevelt

forces with a defence of the development of a specifically American culture - made by American citizens - in opposition to the alien culture from Europe which the 'monied few' bought and valorised over living American artists. Like Federal Art Project discourse, he emphasised both its work-relief status and its progressive cultural nationalism ⁷⁵ .

In a similar vein, Dr. Frank E. Baker, the president of the State Teachers College, Milwaukee, argued at the Detroit Convention of the National Educational Alliance, that the 'permanent' problem of unemployment had to be remedied and that art 'dealing as it does with the imperishables of life, offers one broad avenue for the employment of thousands of people' ⁷⁶ . Mr. Lawrence Vail Coleman, director of the American Association Of Museums, thought that the Federal Art Project was 'the most important thing that had happened to American art in the last 100 years' ⁷⁷ . Max Weber thought that the attempts to dismantle the Project would be no less than 'a great and irretrievable national cultural calamity' ⁷⁸ .

From the Museum Of Modern Art in New York came support from A. Conger Goodyear, the president of the Museum ⁷⁹ . Alfred H. Barr Jr., said he was:

'greatly encouraged by the quality of the WPA and believed that it would be a serious blow to American culture if it were to be discontinued' 80

Again, this attitude from the Museum Of Modern Art demonstrated the existence in the late 1930s in America of a licensed stylistic eclecticism within contemporary art. While contemporary European art had been constructed

by the Museum exhibitions as consisting essentially of a Modernist trajectory, in the U.S.A., at this conjuncture, a variety of paths appeared open and apparently equally sanctioned ⁸¹ .

A subject which will be discussed later in this chapter - the nature and consequences of the support for the Federal Art Project and the New Deal by the American Artists' Congress - is worth mentioning in this general context of the discussion of support for the Project. An article in their bulletin American Art pointed out that the history of the Federal Art Project was very nearly the story of its continuous battle against destruction. According to the article:

'The artists on the project have been constantly in the position of having to do the work with one hand while fighting against cuts, discontinuation, slashes with the other' 82

In late 1938, the wages of the Federal Art Project workers were lowered to a maximum 1000 dollars per annum - less than 20 dollars per week. The origin of this reduction, the article said, was obscured by the confusion of political antagonisms and economic contradictions that surrounded administrative manoeuvres in Washington ⁸³ .

In late 1937 a delegation of cultural workers from the New York City art projects went to Washington to speak to Works Progress Administration controllers in order to get them to explain the reductions and re-organisations effecting the projects in New York City. In an account of their ultimately futile attempts to get acceptable answers, one administrator told them:

'None of the Federal art projects are supported by the communities. Everyone of the other projects has a friend at court. They have a lot of people who don't want four art projects. We have to fight for it. They think the government has no business in this kind of work'

84

A second administrator told them there was 'no doubt'⁸⁵ that forces were at work in America to 'wipe the whole thing out'⁸⁶. Works Progress Administration unions had struck against the cuts in their funding and employment regulations, which Roosevelt regarded as an effective coup d'etat⁸⁷. If a strike occurred nationally, the administrator argued, 'you can kiss the WPA goodbye. It will be the last time you will get anything out of Congress'⁸⁸. The cuts in the Works Progress Administration employment quotas were made on the assumption that private enterprise would reabsorb the labour force; the supporters of the Federal Art Project believed that all, or most, of the artists sacked wouldn't re-enter employment:

'should the artist not be reinstated on WPA, it can be assumed that he ceases to be an artist, for, under present conditions, there is no chance for him to make a living'

89

This understanding of the nature of the art market for contemporary artists in America in the late 1930s was the motive force behind the establishment of several committees for the defence of the Federal Art Project. According to a broadsheet produced by the Citizens Committee Formed To Save The WPA Art Projects, the 'age of private patronage is over. If the Government does not resuscitate the arts, what will happen? What about our native art? Under economic pressure artists can not ~~work~~ creatively. Material security

will release spiritual wealth' ⁹⁰ . Another group argued that the government wanted to end the art projects by turning them directly into defence projects for the coming war and thus end their function of allowing artists to produce 'freely' for the nation. The Citizens Committee For Government Art Projects was convinced that the projects were essential to 'the highest national well-being and that they serve defence at a vital point, the moral and mental peace of the Citizenry' ⁹¹ . This concept of a 'moral-cultural defence' is mobilised again by Aline Davis Hayes, the secretary for this committee, who argued that 'our cultural defence' must be maintained by those fitted by education and temperament to understand the problems and appreciate the fundamental and enduring values of the living arts in the lives of the people ⁹² .

Finally, one sign of the development of opposition to the Federal Art Project's relief policy which began to emphasise a distinction between 'good art' and 'bad art' concerned the increasing attempts of some local administrators to vet their project workers. Colonel Brehon Somervelle, an ex-army officer, became the Works Progress Administration relief employment officer in New York City after the changes in 1939. He attempted to establish an 'advisory committee' of artists and managers whose task would be to single out project artists for either recommendation or dismissal. An avid anti-communist, Somervelle quickly led the unionised artists in New York City to organise against him and to refuse to sit on his 'advisory committee' ⁹³ . The debates over this issue also demonstrated the turning-of once friendly press support away

from the Federal Art Project. Edward Alden Jewell, the New York Times art critic, supported the idea of the committee because:

'there is no reason, so long as other types of work are available, why a man who is not qualified should be employed, out of public funds, as a creative artist' 94

According to Jewell, 'bad art' produced out of public funds would result in a 'grave lowering of our art standards' 95 . The Federal Art Project may thus become a liability to both the national economy and to a national culture. As will be seen, in the context of the coming war, the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the decline perceived by the right and centre in the 'principles of American freedom', the Federal Art Project and its predominantly visible left-wing support, became/seen as an active danger.

ANTI-COMMUNISM AND THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT

Within this construction of the Federal Art Project as a danger to the health and sovereignty of the Nation-State, the importance of anti-communism became central. Though the first government subcommittee established with the purpose of investigating alleged communist activity within the State and outside can be traced at least as far back as the Fish Committee in 1931 96 , it is in the late 1930s and especially after the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 that a systematic and obsessive State involvement with anti-communist activity developed 97 . Although it was not illegal for active Communist Party members to be

employed by the government on work-relief schemes, their existence and operation was taken by those opposed to the New Deal as an indictment of large aspects of Roosevelt's administration and policies. Work-relief programmes, and especially the cultural projects were singled out: it was claimed that more communists worked on the cultural projects in New York City than any other part of the Works Progress Administration. The Texan Democratic Representative Martin Dies became the first chairperson of the newly-formed House UnAmerican Activities Committee. This committee began investigations of first the Federal Theatre Project and then the remaining arts projects in New York City ⁹⁸ .

The press coverage of these investigations rapidly and comprehensively spread the 'fear of communism in the country'. With leaders such as 'Red Hunt In WPA' and 'Art Gallery Called Red', the Federal Art Project and beyond that, the Works Progress Administration and Roosevelt's entire government became suspect ⁹⁹ . The Works Progress Administration became seen as complicit in the conspiracy. According to the Evening Post in New York:

'An attempt by agents for the Congressional committee investigating communism to detain lists of communists and Workers Alliance members employed here on the Federal Art Project today appeared to have been blocked by WPA authorities' 100

Although the Federal Art Project authorities later gave way to Congressional committee demands, the charges levelled against project personnel at this stage consisted largely of accusations that communists had acted corruptly in the performance of their duties and not that their political

beliefs were themselves explicitly corrupt ¹⁰¹ . For example, charges included: the appointment, by suspected communist sympathisers of other communists to administrative office; dismissal of a supervisor by a communist on the grounds that the supervisor was anti-Stalinist; keeping a known anti-Stalinist out of a job on the project; and the hiring of communists who had no requisite skills for the job ¹⁰² . This might give the impression that the government considered Trotskyites in 1938 to be an oppressed minority! ¹⁰³ A more alarmist story was carried by the New York Times under the title 'WPA Witness Says Soviet Trained Him In Street Fighting'. This 'witness', whose evidence need never have been corroborated or disproved for the press to have carried the story, claimed that Moscow was aiming to 'capitalise on the hunger and want among the unemployed of capitalist countries and organise them for revolution'. There was also the claim that the Soviet Union was planning to establish a 'black belt' republic in the United States for negroes, presided over by councils appointed from Moscow ¹⁰⁴ .

Pressure on Roosevelt to investigate the activity of 'subversives' within the relief administration established by the New Deal had mounted steadily from 1937. The so-called National Civic Federation, chaired by Ralph M. Easley, had taken upon itself to act as a Citizen-Watchdog, systematically 'gathering evidence' and, paradigmatic of an organised pressure group, inundating Roosevelt with letters and demands. In a series of correspondences dated June 4th, 11th and July 9th, 19th 1937, Easley presented Roosevelt with detailed charges and accounts of 'communist

activity' on government relief schemes. According to Easley, in the early years of the Depression, the Trade Union Unity League 'a communist federation of labor in the U.S. operating under orders from the Communist International in Moscow' had organised unions of unemployed relief workers in various parts of the country ¹⁰⁵ .

Their names were continually changed in order to camouflage their 'real purpose' and their control by William Z. Foster, head of the American Communist Party ¹⁰⁶ . Easley went on to claim that important State relief administrators, including Harry Hopkins' assistant at the Works Progress Administration, Jacob Baker, were Communist Party agents in the League For Mutual Aid ¹⁰⁷ . Easley said:

'We can not escape the observation that the use of communist forces by government functionaries for purpose of pressure in a freely-elected American congress, is a novel departure in American Government, to say the least' 108

It was a short step from this to claim that Harry Hopkins had told his workers in the Works Progress Administration that the Communist Party strike organisers would help him to force larger relief appropriations through Congress. Further, Easley argued that because of the political beliefs of many of the relief administrators, the administrations themselves were 'communistic'. Specifically:

'Communist influence is predominant on the white-collar and professional projects - the group which was so clearly turned over to communistic organisations during the administration of Mr. Jacob Baker and especially the subgroups now under the general supervision of Lawrence Morris, Henry Alsberg, Holger Cahill and Mrs. Hallie Flanagan' 109

According to Easley, the Federal Writers Project had been

'turned over completely into the hands of the communists',¹¹⁰ . Yet again, there is a resistance against making the substance of the danger the beliefs of communism: rather this implication works contiguously with the enunciation of more familiar defects. Among these suspect sympathisers 'are men repeatedly convicted for the sale of obscene literature, habitual drunkards, former bootleggers and communist salesmen of questionable goods, moral perverts and similar types' ¹¹¹ .

Relief workers and administrators defended their jobs against the activities of both the National Civic Federation and the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. According to Local 114, in a letter to Roosevelt, the anti-communistic investigations were a move to discredit the New Deal and the Federal Art Project ¹¹² . Rockwell Kent, in a letter to the Dies Committee, denied the testimonies made against him that he was a communist and had received extortionate payments for the art he produced for the government ¹¹³ . Nelson A. Rockefeller wrote to Edward T. Taylor, chairman of the subcommittee investigating the Works Progress Administration, giving his support to the Federal Art Project and its activities and denying any communist conspiracy against the national interest ¹¹⁴ .

'AMERICAN LIBERALISM' AND THE EMERGENCE OF AESTHETICS

In early and mid 1940 after the outbreak of war in Europe, the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and its resulting articulation in the United States as a division

between the Stalinists and the Trotskyites, together with the later Soviet invasion of Finland and the disarray this caused the American Left, Art Digest began a series of articles attacking the American Artists' Congress and, by implication, the Federal Art Project. Peyton Boswell, writing the magazine's editorial, argued that the American Artists' Congress was doing nothing to help the American artist. This article illustrates the shift away from support for the Project's conception of the social and communal nature of American art, towards what became articulated later as a fully-fledged 'art-for-art-sake' aesthetic ¹¹⁵. The Congress may have other purposes, the magazine argued:

'but not one of them is even remotely connected with Art. What is the Congress doing to help the American artist? With vague, watery generalities, these good politicians put themselves on record for "peace", "democracy" and "freedom of expression" and the Bill of Rights' 116

Going on to attack the 'ethical dishonesty' of the Congress leadership, Boswell slams the national chairperson, Stuart Davis, as a Stalinist and the 'inner circle' of the New York leaders as 'scurrilous and lying' ¹¹⁷ for their support of the Soviet Union's actions ¹¹⁷. The liberal pretensions of the Congress were 'a fashionable mask for dangerous reaction' ¹¹⁸. The Congress compared with the Ku Klux Klan ¹¹⁹. Attacking the Congress for its lack of interest in encouraging private enterprise art patronage in America and citing the supportive role of Thomas J. Watson, the President of I.B.M., for buying 96 paintings produced by living American artists ¹²⁰, Boswell ended by

challenging the 'true liberals' such as Mumford, Biddle, Pearson, Billings and Zorach to take control from the 'art politicians' in the Congress ¹²¹. Perhaps for the first time, 'liberal political activism' is also constructed by Boswell as necessarily contiguous with 'progressive, experimental art'. The 'social democratic' paintings shown by the Congress at their last exhibition might be just that, but Were They Art? ¹²²

In the next edition, Boswell returned to the attack with the ammunition that in the interim the Congress had split over the Soviet Union's invasion of Finland and its endorsement of Hitler's position of assigning responsibility for the war to England and France ¹²³. Boswell coined a new term which articulated precisely the opening up of a 'liberal' space and discourse at polarities with both fascism and communism: the 'communazi' ¹²⁴. Against this composite alien subject, Boswell constructed the artist subject-position, rearticulated in a discourse of distance and absence of social involvement: 'The Liberalism of the artist is self-less idealism, not something to be prostituted on the couch of international politics' ¹²⁵. The 'true liberals' in the Congress, he argued, refused to be railroaded by the 'totalitarian fifth column' and seceded from the organisation' ¹²⁶. Quoting the manifesto of the rebel group, Boswell triumphantly celebrated the emergence of 'true' Liberalism:

'The air these days is clearer and considerably more healthy around New York since the Communazis have been driven into the open and can no longer hide beneath the robes of "Peace", "Democracy" and "Culture"...Remember, the "Communist Front" label was not placed there

by sniping Tories: it was placed there and sealed, by liberals within the Congress' own membership; artists who were on the inside and should know whereof they speak. All the counter charges of the remaining Congress leaders - Jerome Klein, Lynd Ward, Hugo Gallert, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Louis Lozowick, Phil Evergood, William Gropper, Joe Jones, H. Glinken Kamp - will not make reactionaries out of Dr. Meyer Schapiro, Ralph M. Pearson, Lewis Mumford or William Zorach' 127

Boswell asserted the need for a truly 'liberal organisation' for artists who 'love art and also the freedom that makes art possible' ¹²⁸. With the end of the Works Progress Administration proper, the resurgence of private capital in rearming the United States for war, the political and operational emasculation of the art projects after 1939 together with their investigation by the Dies Committee as communist-front organisations, could this 'freedom' entail the State's further involvement via the Federal Art Project? ¹²⁹

FEDERAL ART PROJECT 'POPULAR FRONTISM'

In the August 1st edition of Art Digest, Boswell had no sympathy for the federal artist August Henkel, whose airport mural at Floyd Bennett field, Brooklyn, was destroyed because of its alleged communist propaganda ¹³⁰. This justified action, according to Boswell, was neither 'red baiting' nor 'book burning': 'it was just a case of a swindled customer - the public ¹³¹ - dumping a defective purchase in a convenient ashcan' ¹³². Apart from Henkel Being a known communist and his painting having 'obvious Communistic propaganda', its destruction was

justified on 'the more valid charge of just plain bad art' ¹³³ . Henkel, previous to joining the Federal Art Project, Boswell said, had been a mere commercial artist; now his inexperience and lack of talent was undermining the reputation of the Project, for which Boswell still declared his sympathy ¹³⁴ . But if he was to retain his sympathy, it was necessary that the Federal Art Project administrators work to root out the subversives and incompetents they had harboured. This had not always been the case, Boswell said.

Colonel Somervelle's activities and accusations found him alienated not only from the Artists' Union, the American Artists' Congress and other affiliated bodies, but also from the high level management of the Federal Art Project itself. The administrator Lawrence Morris, in a letter to Ellen S. Woodward, at the Works Progress Administration, said that he thought communism had become an obsession with Somervelle and that he had no way of knowing whether his claims could be substantiated or not ¹³⁵ . Even more significantly, Holger Cahill's deputy in Washington, Thomas C. Parker, actually took the side of the Artists' Union over the activities of Somervelle. He said, in a letter to Lawrence Morris, that he:

'wholeheartedly approved of all their protests and feel it is necessary that some action be taken by the Federal Division in calling the attention of Colonel Somervelle's office to the fact that the artists' groups have well-founded protests against the policy which they have adopted'

136

This alliance between the Federal Art Project admin-

istrative staff - which even went as high as Cahill himself - and artists' groups, which came together for the explicit purpose of defending the work-relief schemes, the Works Progress Administration and the New Deal in general, had the effect of making the interests of the Federal Art Project and the Works Progress Administration appear virtually identical to that of the oppositional political groupings of the Communist Party and the American Labor Party, together with the specific articulation of these groupings with the Artists' Union and the American Artists' Congress. Before the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the splits between the Stalinists and the non-Stalinists in the Communist Party, the politicised artists' groupings had seen the attacks on the Federal Art Project and the New Deal in terms of the 'Popular Front' strategy of the Comintern, inaugurated in 1935. In the catalogue for the previously mentioned exhibition called 'Dedicated To The New Deal', it was stated that:

'Artists have become aware of the sharpening conflict between reaction and progress; they have definitely aligned themselves with the forces grouped around the New Deal, which they are defending because they realise that its cultural enemies are also the enemies of democracy and culture' 137

Articulated with this was a prescription for the type of art which could best represent the forces for 'cultural progress' and democracy ¹³⁸. As the Popular Front attempted to crystallise support from many strata for 'the fight for democracy', it 'seemed logical that content in art should develop and reflect the people's desires for the utilisation of modern knowledges and modern experiences

in the interests of the average person' ¹³⁹ . Art Front in an article called 'To The American People', argued that the artist can not stand by while the 'victory for American culture' which was the Federal Art Project, was nullified ¹⁴⁰ . No longer to be treated simply as a question of work relief, the project must be 'consolidated as a permanent feature of our national life' ¹⁴¹ . The destruction of this programme as an economy measure, would be to show contempt for the 'intellectual pride and the democratic spirit of the country' ¹⁴² . Fully mobilising the discourses produced by the Federal Art Project around the nodal points of Citizenry, Democracy and Nationalism, this 'Project Popular Frontism' attempted to align exactly the 'progressive' forces of the New Deal with a Marxist-Stalinist analysis of the potential for a properly 'American Socialism' ¹⁴³ . Six articles appeared in the Daily Worker in early 1938 devoted to an account of the national resurgence of the arts in the New Deal. 'In our country', one article began:

'the fight for culture has been consistently carried out by the progressives, while the reactionaries have fought bitterly to defeat all measures that would further the cultural development of the whole people. This is as much a fact today as it was a century and more ago...' 144

Similar support came from an exhibition at the American Labor Party Club called 'Art Of/By/For The People'. The recovery of an historical past within which the Artist as Citizen-Subject had been 'disenfranchised' from social and political activity, had a contemporary relevance in the reactionary attempts to ditch the Federal

Art Project. Artists, 'scorning civic activity, abjuring political allegiance - did not Winslow Homer flee from New York to escape Jury Duty? They lived apart from dust, blood and tears. Thus art was remote from human struggle' ¹⁴⁵ . Now, in 1938, the American Labor Party formed an Artists' Committee and in holding exhibitions and forums, gave 'culture political recognition for the first time in American history' ¹⁴⁶ . The future strength and freedom of the American artist lay in the 'ever broadening power of democratic government' ¹⁴⁷ . Artist and worker, artist as worker, was an identity constructed as a necessity if political democracy and cultural progress were to follow ¹⁴⁸ .

THE ECLIPSE OF 'SOCIAL PAINTING'

This 'popular front' prescription involved both a 'social' and 'realist' art form, seen as necessarily articulated with marxism understood as an ontology of class and a realist epistemology. It is well represented in a Daily Worker review entitled 'Abstract Art Exhibit Barely Comprehensible; Content Of Paintings Far Removed From Reality; Several Display Anarchic Political Views' ¹⁴⁹ . A scathing attack on an exhibition by the American Abstract Artists Group ¹⁵⁰ , the reviewer facetiously reported:

'most of the artists go the whole hog,
with rarely a glimpse of the crass
material world coming through to
break contact with the infinite' ¹⁵¹

Picasso, in comparison,—the reviewer said, would be

regarded as a 'stark realist'. George L.K. Morris and Balcombe Greene's abstractions received special attention. The former was 'so concerned with structure and the framework of art that he misses the organic substance' ¹⁵² . Greene simply 'gets his idea of Marxism wrong' ¹⁵³ .

In opposition to this articulation of the necessary relation of marxism to a 'realist representational mode', Stuart Davis' views should not be forgotten. National chairperson of the American Artists' Congress, possibly a member of the Communist Party, he constantly attacked such prescriptions ¹⁵⁴ . Though distancing himself from the American Abstract Artists Group, he argued consistently that 'social content in art is not dependent upon descriptive naturalism in method' ¹⁵⁵ . Further, the Federal Art Project could work to enable abstract painting to develop and take on new forms ¹⁵⁶ . Davis attacked what he called the 'Federal Art Project style' and thus distinguished between this and a more obvious 'critical' or 'socialist' realism produced by both federal artists and others. If domestic naturalism consisted of scenes of the chicken yard, the pussy cat and the farmer's wife, the reverse were scenes of 'the picket line, the Dust Bowl, the home relief office, etc' ¹⁵⁷ .

Stuart Davis' involvement with the American Artists' Congress, in its organisation of events and artists in the developing anti-fascist struggle in the late 1930s, made obvious both his sincere attempts to link formal experimentation in art to leftwing political activism and his attempts to draw parallels between fascism in Europe and the danger of an American fascism ¹⁵⁸ . Conferences held

by the American Artists' Congress in February 1936 and December 1937 contained debates on 'The Defense Of Culture In Spain' - with Picasso speaking on the telephone from Paris - and accounts of how the federal government was trying to ban foreign-born citizens from taking employment on work-relief schemes ¹⁵⁹ _{1/2} The February Conference had papers dealing with the issues of 'What Is Worth Fighting For' (Rockwell Kent), 'Repression Of Art In America' (Joe Jones), 'The Negro In American Culture' (Aaron Douglas), 'The Position Of The Artist In The U.S.S.R.' (Margaret Bourke-White), 'The Established Artist In Relation To War And Fascism' (Paul Manship) and 'Artists Boycott Of Berlin Olympics Art Exhibition' (George Biddle). The American Artists' Congress clearly articulated a relationship between capitalism and the threat of fascism in America:

'The artists are among those most effected by the world's economic crisis. Dealers, museums, and private patrons have long ceased to supply the meagre support they once gave...Rockefeller Center, Museum Of Modern Art, Old Court House in St. Louis, Coit Tower in San Francisco, Abraham Lincoln High School, Rikers Island Penitentiary, in those and other important public and semi-public institutions, censorship, suppression and actual destruction of works of art has occurred' 160

The American Artists' Congress, the Artists' Union and Art Front articulated their anti-fascist struggle so closely to their conception of the aims and activities of the Federal Art Project and the New Deal that this relation of interests appeared to those opposed to the Project as an identity of interests. Thus, against the understanding of the Project as an ensemble of legitimating

discourses which worked to secure a capitalist hegemony through the extension of the interventionist State, it was possible for the Project, the Works Progress Administration, and in some versions, the entire New Deal, to be constructed as 'communistic' by opposing forces and fractions, both inside the State apparatuses and outside ¹⁶¹ . Even as far back as 1934, before the Federal Art Project began, an early edition of Art Front made this identification between the New Deal and the Artists' Union:

'Art Front is the crystallisation of all the forces in art surging forward to combat the destructive and chauvinistic tendencies which are becoming more distinct daily. A new frontier is being created [The Public Works Of Art Project]. Help to extend it.' ¹⁶²

The American Left's Popular Frontism, with its conception of the specific national conditions within which a socialist movement could develop and with a tactic aimed at allying 'bourgeois democratic' nations against fascism in Germany and Italy, articulated a discourse close in nature to that of the Federal Art Project's official discourses on Nationhood, Democracy and Social Planning. A 'progressive populism' articulated both sets of discourses, each redolent with a 'stagist paradigm' derived alternatively from a Marxist-Stalinism or an American-Constitutionalism ¹⁶³ .

According to Stuart Davis, in a report to the American Artists' Congress in late 1936:

'the exposure of the Black Legion and the fascist army being organised within the WPA in New York are proof that in our country serious attempts are being made to organise reaction and race-prejudice

into Fascist groups. Artists now know that when Mr. Hearst carries on a vicious red-baiting attack against workers, struggling for their legal right to organise,, that his fascist intentions directly concern their future as artists. They do not need the added proof given by his art reporters that the artists are "bohemian, chistlers, and squawkers or that New York is pestilent with artists who can neither make art nor leave it" 164

By 1940 with the effective termination of the Federal Art Project and its condemnation as subversive, the American Artists' Congress call for the 'defense of culture' meant the defence of the rump of the Federal Art Project and the remains of the Congress itself. In a June 1941 Conference, what was left of the Congress debated the future of American art without the Federal Art Project. Harry Sternberg talked on 'The Artist In Private Industry', Morris Neuwith on 'New Horizons In Private Industry' and John Lawson on 'American Democracy: Its Past Hopes, Its Present Betrayal And Its Future Promise' ¹⁶⁵ . What lay ahead for the American artist was the return to the free market, to the patronage of corporations and entrepreneurs and a dismal role in the State's national defence strategy. With the eclipse of 'social painting' and the artists' lauded 'communal function' in the 'lives of the people', the newly 'freed' artist was to be free of politics, free of 'communazis' and free of the requirement to represent the world. These atleast, were the emergent, and strident, critical protocols.

Notes To Chapter 7

1. Again, it should be stressed that 'discourse' is used here in the extensive sense developed by Laclau and Mouffe. See Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.108-9.
2. For a discussion of how the U.S. State 'politicised' the military, see C. Wright Mills The Power Elite, Chapter 9. Writing in 1956, Mills said 'the politicisation of the high military [had] been going on over the last fifteen years', pp.199-200.
3. On what Serge Guilbaut called the 'demarxification' of the American intelligentsia, see his essay 'The New Adventures Of The Avant Garde In America', October 15, Winter 1980, pp.61-78. Also Daniel Aaron Writers On The Left.
4. Quoted in David Milton The Politics Of US Labor: From The Great Depression To The New Deal, p.117. Milton says: 'By 1940, the configuration of corporate power, liberal politics and anti-communism legitimised by a war economy blocked further advance of class conscious industrial unionism in the US', p.122. See also, Mike Davis 'The Barren Marriage Of American Labour And The Democratic Party', New Left Review 124, November-December 1980, pp.43-84.
5. Specifically, industrial/financial corporations, the press and cultural institutions. According to Mike Davis, *ibid.*, 'this emergent "military-industrial complex" succeeded where the NRA [National Recovery Administration] had failed in moulding the political and economic ingredients for state monopoly capitalism', p.63.
6. Right-wing historiography of the New Deal has condemned it as 'socialist' and 'communist'. Frank Freidel refutes this in his The New Deal In Historical Perspective, pp.5-7. David Milton accounts that the Republican National Committee labelled Roosevelt 'the Kerensky of the American revolutionary movement', p.91.
7. Ofcourse, it is questionable whether its primacy was ever displaced. Certainly, Roosevelt's political rhetoric attempted to displace the doxa that America was rightfully run by capitalist interests through a free-market economy.
8. See David Milton, *op cit.*, chapters 'Roosevelt-CIO Coalition' and 'Roosevelt Captures The CIO'. According to Milton, 'By 1940 the state proved to be the instrument capable of coercing a new national consensus in a climate of wartime crisis. In the classic manner, class conflict was dissolved in the heady brew of nationalism', p.122.
9. HC/1109/AAA. In the News, from Charlotte North Carolina, in an article entitled 'Pap For The Arts', it was claimed 'WPA projects may occasionally help people with talent who are just beginning to learn their trade of writing, painting and composing. But by and large, all they can do is keep false hopes alive in mediocrities who have only a vague yearning to be artistic'. HC/1104/AAA. It should be pointed out that the newspaper reports mentioned in this chapter were found in the Archives Of American Art and do not represent a realistic cross section of either national or local newspapers.

10. World Herald, Omaha, Nebraska (no date). HC/1109/AAA.
11. Standard Times, New Bedford, Mass., May 16th 1938. HC/1109/AAA.
12. *ibid.* For a detailed study of the artist-client relationship during the 1930s on the Treasury art projects, see Karal A. Marling Wall To Wall America.
13. Letter to Cahill, December 18th 1936. FVOC/1084/AAA.
14. FVOC/1084/AAA. In O'Connor's survey of project artists conducted in 1968, of those who responded, 65% said they had belonged to the Artists' Union, 45% to the American Artists' Congress and 45% said they read Art Front, the Artists' Union newspaper.
15. September 28th 1938. FVOC/1084/AAA.
16. *ibid.*
17. It continued 'they only sign in once a week to do their work at home three hours a day or fifteen hours per week, and get several weeks vacation with pay'.
18. For a useful discussion of the economic and social conditions of the 'alienation' of artists in modern industrial societies, see Janet Wolff The Social Production Of Art, Chapter 1.
19. Jobs are, within this mythology, 'created', not 'produced'.
20. Mass firings - what was called 'the pink slip' - began as far back as 1937.
21. Less than two months after the official opening of the New York World Fair, the WPA underwent a massive re-organisation with a substantial cut in personnel and funding. In 1938 Roosevelt's attempted purge of rebel democrats in Congress failed and in fact 81 Republicans gained seats in the House Of Representatives and 8 in the Senate. According to McKinzie, a concerted Congressional attack on the WPA began in January 1939 with an alliance between Clifton Woodrum (a conservative democrat) and John Taber (a republican) who were to be responsible for the end of the Federal Theatre Project. 'Immediately the Woodrum-Taber alliance challenged the assumption that advancement of the traditional cultural arts was a proper function of government', The New Deal For Artists, p.159.
22. In a statement by T.C. Barker, to be incorporated into Congressional Hearing, February 10th 1938. FAP/DC53/AAA.
23. For a fuller discussion of the bill, see McKinzie, *op cit.*, pp. 151ff.
24. Resolution 671, House Of Representatives, May 4th 1938. The motion continued '...in order that our people now and in the future will have the benefits arising from the development of talented cultural personalities and institutions native to our country and its people...' NDA/15/AAA.
25. In Senate January 5th 1938.
26. The bill reads 'during the entire history of our nation and up to the time of the creation of these projects, the arts were jealously guarded possessions of the few and were not made available to the majority. Works of art were confined to privately incorporated museums, difficult to visit...the enjoyment of culture has, in the country's past, been predicated too much upon the ability of the individual to pay'. With the Federal Art

Project, however, 'the arts have been decentralised through federal patronage. They have been extended and made available to the entire country. Mural paintings depicting significant and stirring events in American history and present-day life have not only made schools and other buildings more beautiful, but of greater community interest...It is the obligation of the Government to recognise that culture as represented by the arts is a social necessity consistent with democracy'.

27. *ibid.*
28. Letter to Roosevelt, October 6th 1936. FVOC/1085/AAA.
29. *ibid.*
30. In a statement entitled 'Declaration Of Policy', EMCC/D374/AAA.
31. Letter to Harry Hopkins, March 21st 1936. George Biddle had a similar conception of art 'It is an understatement to say that art will be the preventative medicine for the healthy as well as the emotional release for those who have lived too long in spiritual concentration camps'. Memo on the post-war re-organisation of the Section Of Painting And Sculpture and other Federal Art Projects (no date). HC/1106/AAA.
32. American Magazine Of Art no title, September 1935; vol.xxviii, no.9: 'The predicament of the artist is not a temporary one; it is permanent. It has been aggravated, but not caused, by the depression and it will not end when the depression ends, if ever. The American artist has never had a wide dependable market and millions of dollars poured into "appreciation" have failed to produce one...'
33. 'For A Permanent Bureau Of Fine Art', statement by the Artists' Union (no date). DK/1337/AAA. In an article entitled 'Culture On The March' in the Artists League Of America News, no.2, 1944, the group was still arguing that 'the arts must play an important role in the development of the education of the citizen. One of its goals must be the attainment of cultural literacy for all the people'. FVOC/1084/AAA.
34. Roosevelt's 'economic royalists' speech was given in 1936. He said 'The royalists of the economic order have conceded that political freedom was the business of the government, but they have maintained that economic slavery was no one's business. They granted that the government could protect the citizen in his right to vote, but they denied that government could do anything to protect the citizen in his right to work and his right to live. Today we stand committed to the proposition that freedom is no half-and-half affair. If the average citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must be given equal opportunity in the market place'. Quoted in James MacGregor Burns Roosevelt: The Lion And The Fox, volume 1, p.274.
35. American Magazine Of Art July 1935; vol.xxvii, no.7.
36. *ibid.*
37. *ibid.*
38. 'The Government And Art' Art Digest December 1937; vol.xii, no.6: '...if the Government is to continue subsidising almost every class of worker in America and

pour out an annual seven billion dollars, the artist should get his... Surely his path to livelihood has been as weedy as that of the farmer who gets paid for not raising something. Economies made in the art subsidy, totalising a mere two million dollars (a guess) will make scarcely a ripple in the tidal wave of government spending "towards a more abundant life". After quoting Duncan, Boswell continued 'Artists forget that, as a whole, they run just as high, if not higher, in incompetence as the rest of us who have to fetch home the canned beans'.

39. The Oregonian continued 'We have reached the point where any blank wall is an open invitation to the muralist to paint on it or to prepare a panel to be plastered against it. The tax payer not only pays for all this: he can't escape the product. Under an extended project he could not so much as purchase a postage stamp without having to meet pointblank the result of his involuntary gift to the artists. His children would be exposed to it in schools. He could not even get a public official relegated to obscurity for down the years that official's portrait would glower at him in revenge...' HC/1109/AAA.
40. 'Damrosch Fears Mediocre Art In Federal Bureau', Post (New York) March 18th 1938. HC/1109/AAA.
41. This re-emergence must be more fully examined than is possible here and related to the hegemonic critical discourse which constructed post-war Abstract Expressionism. In the late 1930s this aesthetic discourse is articulated in opposition to a set of operative notions of 'social art', 'public art' and 'patriotic art'. Ed Bruce argued that the 'best possible picture' to be painted by a federal artist was that of Daniel Boone Emerging From The Kentucky Rain Forests, by Ward Lockwood, painted on the Section Of Painting And Sculpture. The emergence of a concept of art as an unproblematic 'aesthetic' issue is also articulated in a number of ways. There is the developing modernist paradigm where 'the aesthetic' is constructed as denoting a range of formal and material decisions and a more traditional paradigm where it is related to skill, subject matter and taste. Jerome Klein, defender of the Federal Art Project, attacked the Fine Arts Federation on the latter case: the Federation was concerned, he said, that 'in the long run academy members would be adversely effected by the "lowered standards". But the bill does not exclude academy members as such. They can present their qualifications as well as any other. What is the matter, gentlemen of the Federation, are you afraid to test your much-touted "standards" in fair competition? Isn't that compatible with your notion of the "Genius of our democracy?"' Post (New York) February 12th 1938. HC/1109/AAA.
42. 'Freedom Of Expression' Art And Artists Of Today June-July 1940. He continued 'America is at the moment in a very healthy condition for the very reason that it has no one individual or group dominating. In America, the artists still have freedom of expression and it is the one thing we must fight to retain'.
43. 'Federal Bureau Of Art Opposed' Times (New York) February

13th 1938. HC/1109/AAA.

44. These included: Fine Art Federation, National Academy Of Design, New York Chapter Of The American Institute Of Architects, American Watercolor Society, Society Of American Artists, Architectural League Of New York, The Municipal Art Society Of New York, National Society Of Mural Painters, Brooklyn Chapter Of The American Institute Of Architects, American Group Societe des Architectes Diplomas pour le Government.
45. This must be stressed. The construction of a tactical alliance of interests around the issue of the Federal Art Project and the bills for a permanent bureau was precisely that - tactical - and did not reflect an identity of interests, although the socialists and communists involved often appeared to present their views and beliefs as identical to those of the New Dealers such as Cahill and Biddle.
46. Francis Henry Taylor 'Pork Barrel Renaissance' American Magazine Of Art March 1938; vol.xxxi, no.3.
47. For McKinzie's account of this, see The New Deal For Artists, p.154.
48. Reported in 'Death Dance Kills Fine Art Measure', in the Washington Times (no date). HC/1109/AAA.
49. The substitution of the term 'Projects' for 'Progress' seems symptomatic of the pressures on Roosevelt's administration to renounce its 'radical' position vis a vis attempting to police monopoly capitalism.
50. This is discussed later in the chapter. An account of the end of the Federal Theatre Project, which had been directed by Hallie Flanagan, is contained in McKinzie, op cit., pp.154-163.
51. In 1938 the sponsor in New York State became the Board Of Education; in New York City the Mayor's Office. From a high of 2323 artists employed in New York in 1936, this fell to a low of 1160 in September 1939. This represented a 70% cut back in New York. According to Jane deHart Mathews, op cit., after federal support was withdrawn, there was generally little effort to keep the Project going. In Florida, 13 out of 14 art centres closed, 10 in North Carolina, 11 in Oklahoma, 4 in Tennessee, and Utah. Even the Community Art Centre in Raleigh, North Carolina, couldn't survive the demise of the WPA, despite the fact that local art enthusiasts had worked for the creation of the state art museum since the formation of the State Art Society in 1925.
52. Although Hallie Flanagan (Federal Theatre Project) and Henry G. Alsberg (Federal Writers Project) were to testify in defence of their projects, Cahill and Sokoloff (Federal Music Project) opted not to.
53. 'Slackers Under The Sun' American Magazine Of Art October 1939; vol.xxxii, no.10. It continued 'Let us not, as Conger Goodyear so tellingly put it, at the luncheon for the trustees of the Whitney Museum Of American Art, spend too much time sobbing at the radio, and let us, as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney said in her address on the same occasion, "do our jobs"....' (Forbes Watson).
54. F.A. Whiting Jr. 'Five Important Years' American Magazine Of Art October 1939; vol.xxxii, no.10.

55. See the Introduction to this thesis: 'The Components Of Hegemonic Discourse'.
56. F.A. Whiting Jr. 'Bandwagons In Review: An Editorial' American Magazine Of Art December 1938; vol.xxxi, no.12.
57. Peyton Boswell 'Art In Politics' Art Digest October 1936; vol.xi, no.2. It continued 'The issue of art should and must be kept separate from the issue of politics. Art represents the Right and the Left and the Middle'.
58. *ibid.*
59. *ibid.*
60. Many titles refer directly to Roosevelt's speeches.
61. From the catalogue 'Dedicated To The New Deal', ACA Gallery, New York City, 1938.
62. *ibid.* The catalogue rationalised 'as for the really bad art, good quality will eventually reduce it to its proper place'. In a review of the exhibition by Peyton Boswell in Art Digest May 1940; vol.xiv, no.15, he said 'the American Contemporary Art Gallery this year houses a large, well-selected exhibition of work done by artists who are, or have been, on the Federal Art Project. After a preliminary viewing, my verdict is that this vigorous exciting show is definitely superior to the badly juried display of American art a year ago'.
63. In Helen A. Harrison 'Towards A "Fit Plastic Language": Six Muralists At The New York World Fair', p.23.
64. The Project kept records of the prizes won by its artists. These included: James Michael Newell - the Architectural League Gold Medal 1936; Robert W. Godfrey - for a portrait purchased by the Metropolitan Museum Of Art; Lester Schwartz - awarded the Edward L. Ryerson Travelling Fellowship Of 2500 Dollars by the Chicago Art Institute; ten Federal Art Project print designs chosen for the British Museum's Fine Prints Of The Year 1937, edited by Campbell Dodgson; 39 painters and sculptors included in the exhibition 'Three Hundred Years Of American Art' at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1938. FAP/DC56/AAA.
65. The Nation May 27th 1939. HC/1109/AAA.
66. *ibid.*
67. 'Save The Art Projects' Nation July 17th 1937. BA/2976/AAA.
68. *ibid.*
69. 'Art Under Five Years Of Federal Patronage' The American Scholar Summer 1940; vol.ix, no.3. HC/1109/AAA.
70. *ibid.*
71. 'Perhaps American artists are not yet mature enough or sufficiently inspired to produce a noble and transparent expression of our civilisation. We are stepping here on very uncertain ground. My own belief is that when we have such talent it will not express itself most comfortably through the dusty atmosphere of the performance bonds and the vouchers in triplicate of the Public Buildings Administration...' *ibid.*
72. He went on 'God knows what these projects may have been in other hands'. In an even more euphoric tone, Alfred M. Bingham, the editor of Common Sense wrote: 'It is almost as if the Declaration Of Independence was only now beginning to come to fruition in this

vital importance sphere of life...The most extraordinary thing about this cultural development is that in taking art out of the salon, away from the snobbishness and bringing it into the fresh air to be shared by the common people, standards have risen rather than been lowered'. HC/1109/AAA.

73. Speech in the House Of Representatives April 15th 1936. He said 'There are numerous of these false-front organisations. The idea is that some organiser who has been faking the American people for years adopts some sort of name indicative of virtue, patriotism or friendship to the worker, or to the veteran: then he goes up and secretly gets money from the DuPonts and munitions interests and others; then he operates as if his operation was bona fide...' HC/1109/AAA.
74. *ibid.*
75. *ibid.*
76. Contained in a Federal Art Project file entitled 'Public Responses To A Federal Art Program'. EMCC/D374/AAA.
77. *ibid.*
78. Max Weber, Chairperson of the American Artists' Congress said 'In the two years of its existence the Art Project has proven itself to be an indispensable cultural asset to the nation with far reaching and gratifying rewards and to dismantle it now, or in the future, would be a great and irretrievable national cultural calamity'.
79. In a letter to Congressmen Wriggleworth, June 6th 1939. DCM/1105/AAA.
80. EMCC/D374/AAA.
81. The accusation was made, in fact, that the Museum Of Modern Art actually refused some abstract paintings and designs for the exhibition New Horizons In American Art held in 1936, the same year as the famous Cubism And Abstract Art show which constructed the Museum's history of Modernism in western European art. This work of recovering the contemporary attitude of institutions like the Museum Of Modern Art to American painting before the Second World War is essential to fully understanding the shifts and elisions which later took place in post-war accounts of early American modernism (i.e. anterior to Pollock and Abstract Expressionism).
82. American Art: Bulletin Of The American Artists' Congress, vol.ii, no.1; September 1938 'The Battle Goes On: Wage Cut Is Latest Attack On Art Project'. EMCC/D374/AAA.
83. *ibid.*
84. In DK/1337/AAA. According to the artist and union organiser Chet la More, in a curt discussion with Washington staff, 'you have dismissed people on an arbitrary basis, where you have instructed subordinates to concoct reasons for the dismissal of these people...In other words, there is a campaign within the Administration to bring the sub-administrators into line. Otherwise they will be fired.'
85. *ibid.*
86. 'There are people in Congress who say this thing has

- got to be stopped. They say Hopkins and Williams are carrying these things to excess....'
87. Administrator Williams said 'You can not have a strike in Government. It can't be done. By that means you have a coup d'etat, a turn over of the Government. If 10,000 strike that is one thing. If 100,000 strike that is different - whether you like it or not. We all believe in this democratic institution....'
 88. *ibid.*.. Roosevelt had written to Luther C. Steward, the President of the National Federation Of Federal Employees' (no date): 'I want to stress my conviction that militant tactics have no place in the function of any organisation of Government employees. Upon employees in the Federal service rests the obligation to serve the whole people, whose interests and welfare requires orderliness and continuity in the conduct of Government activities....a strike of public employees manifests nothing less than an intent on their part to obstruct the operation of government until their demands are satisfied...Such action...is unthinkable and intolerable...Participation in these activities by such employees will be considered insubordination and grounds for dismissal'. FVOC/1086/AAA.
 89. In an article entitled 'Protect The US Constitution' (no date) we hear a call for a 'Five Arts Picket Line: 95 Madison Avenue, Friday December 17th' A statement reads 'Our conditions on WPA are rotten. 60,000 of us have just been fired. We get wages as low as 48 and 52 dollars per month. We have to undergo investigations which dig into our private lives and affairs as if we were criminals. This is what Congress did to us when it passed the Woodrow Bill last year under the guise of a "red scare"....' FVOC/1086/AAA.
 89. EMCC/D374/AAA. This continued 'We are planning a public hearing for the dismissed cases of art workers on WPA. At this hearing the administration head, the workers and their families, their project supervisors and a committee of distinguished citizens and the public, will be invited'.
 90. EMCC/D374/AAA. 'Realistically speaking private industry has no solution for the economic problems of the art workers'.
 91. EMCC/D374/AAA. It continued 'The Committee has come into being because its sponsors and members emphatically believe that even in times of crisis, all phases of American life must be defended. Only permanent Government support will give the American people its own democratic culture...'
 92. Circular to Julian Levi, February 14th 1941. JL/483/AAA.
 93. Phil Bard, of the United American Artists Committee To Save The Art Project, in a letter to Julian Levi, said 'Colonel Somervelle wants a jury that he can control and one that is committed from the very start to support the policies of the WPA administration "without discussion"...the activities of the jury will continue to single out artists for dismissal. In view of the above, we hope you will again refuse Somervelle's offer to help choose artists for dismissal'. JL/483/AAA.

Harry Sternberg, the Secretary For The Resigned Group (that is, resigned from serving on Somervelle's jury) wrote to Levi on September 23rd 1940: '...the issue of us serving as a firing squad...the letter / from Somervelle_ is very impertinent. There is vicious innuendo in the Colonel's statement about acting in a completely unbiased way, unswayed by any commitments or affiliations'. JL/483/AAA.

94. November 3rd 1940. JL/483/AAA.
95. He continued 'I think it is high time the sacrosanct atmosphere that has tended to wrap itself around even inadequate expression (on the sufficient grounds that it is original) should be dispersed'. I am told that a great deal of art deemed not fit for allocation has been produced on the art project and that it has widely been withheld. The fact that unallocatable work has been produced does not reflect on the very real usefulness and importance of the art project...and it seems to me that, if properly applied, the criticism offered by a representative advisory board cannot but prove most helpful towards that end'.
96. See Studs Terkel Hard Times, pp.331-337. Fish says 'I was the chairman of the first committee to investigate Communist activity in the United States. It was known as the Fish Committee. It only lasted one year, from '30 to '31. We didn't go after personalities. We didn't send people to jail or anything like that. Congress can't send people to jail, any how. We did go after the organisations, to warn the American people. It was educational...'
97. As previously mentioned, see Frank J. Donner's The UnAmericans. Also of interest is Robert K. Murray Red Scare: A Study In National Hysteria 1919-1920 (McCraw Hill; New York, 1955) which documents the immediate post- First World War 'communist menace' phenomenon.
98. Discussed in McKinzie, op cit., p.154.
99. Evening Post (New York) April 27th 1938; Sun (New York) May 12th 1938. JL/483/AAA,
100. ibid... The Milwaukee Sentinel, May 12th 1938 announced 'Denouncing the Federal Art Project as "bunk", Channing Pollock, author and playwright, declared that through these projects the Government is spreading communist propaganda. Pollock told the Junior Emergency Relief Society: "All this 'art' has two common features - glorification of the Government and telling you what the Government wants you to believe"'.
101. 'Arts Project Workers To Aid House Inquiry; 8400 Ordered By Edwards To Help Dies Committee In Clearing Up Charges Of Communist Domination' Herald Tribune (New York) no date. JL/483/AAA.
102. ibid... By comparison, by 1949 Communism itself had become the crime. In a minute produced by a Committee organised in 1949 (no name) to combat the growth of censorship in the USA, which included representatives from the Artists Equity League, David Fredenthal, William Hayter, I. Rice Pereira and Mitchell Siporin, it is said that Congressman Dondero had vowed 'to wreck any organisation if it has any communists among

- its members even if they are unidentified and that he planned to clean up the entire field including the jury system'. DF/2005/AAA.
103. The extent to which a 'Trotskyite' position in 1938 in America was considered by the right as a 'left opposition' to Stalinism needs investigation. Certainly, as Guilbaut argues; neo-Trotskyism by 1940 began to be assimilated to a 'neo-liberal' anti-communist rhetoric.
 104. Times (no date) New York. DF/2005/AAA.
 105. Ralph M. Easley to Roosevelt, June 4th 1937. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 106. The groups mentioned were: Unemployment Councils, City Project Councils, Project Workers' Union, Federation Of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, Writers' Union, WPA Unit Of The Newspaper Guild Writers' Alliance Of America.
 107. It continued 'The primary function of the League For Mutual Aid is to provide employment for Communists. We find no fault whatsoever with this aim, Communists, like other people, must eat. But private enterprise does not relish employees who devote all their time to agitation among co-workers. An employer has the right to expect good work for good wages paid. Instead of prevailing on its communist clients to substitute earnest work for agitation, the League For Mutual Aid preferred wholesale placement of Communists in relief positions. According to the central committee of the Communist Party, there is not one formerly idle Communist in the country today who does not enjoy a fairly lucrative job in connection with the distribution of public relief funds...'
 108. *ibid.*
 109. That is, the four art projects. Easley produced as an example of this communist subversion the following story: 'In one of the large Eastern industrial states, the state director of the Federal Theatre Project was ordered to produce a puppet show in which the justices of the Supreme Court were represented as clowns and imbeciles who were being slapped about by a heroic figure symbolising Communism, and told to take orders hereafter or find themselves kicked into the street. Further, in this show, the justices appeal to a puppet representing the Lord. Although willing to help the justices, the Lord is told by Communists that his rule is over and for him not to meddle in things any longer'. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 110. Easley to Roosevelt, July 9th 1937.
 111. *ibid.* The branch of the National Civic Federation concerned with 'communist infiltration' was called The Department Of Subversive Activities.
 112. Letter to Roosevelt, August 25th 1938. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 113. 'Kent Denies Red Label' Art Digest November 1939; vol.xiv, no.3.
 114. Rockefeller to Ed T. Taylor, Chairman of the Subcommittee investigating the WPA, May 31st 1939. In an article by Heywood Brown entitled 'Shoot The Works' in New Republic May 10th 1939, it was remarked 'It seems even more than ironic that the chief investigator of the congressional committee investigating the WPA

- should also be a member of the council for the Daughters Of The American Revolution'. FVOC/1084/AAA.
115. This is discussed later in the chapter.
 116. editorial Art Digest April 1940; vol.xiv, no.13.
 117. *ibid.*.. Stuart Davis, the national chairperson of the American Artists' Congress had attacked the 'racism' and 'nationalism' of the art critics Thomas Craven, Peyton Boswell, Henry McBride and C.J. Bulliet. Boswell said 'this attempt at character deformation is a libelous lie'.
 118. *ibid.*..
 119. *ibid.*..
 120. *ibid.*..
 121. Boswell chiefly attacked Davis and Jerome Klein.
 122. *ibid.*.. 'They may be ever so democratic, but are they art?...The tragedy of the American Artists' Committee is its failure to provide progressive, experimental artists with a badly needed liberal organisation.'
 123. Art Digest May 1940; vol.xiv, no.14.
 124. *ibid.*..
 125. *ibid.*..
 126. *ibid.*..
 127. *ibid.*..
 128. *ibid.*.. Boswell continued 'The American Artists Congress has endorsed the Russian invasion of Finland and implicitly defended Hitler's position by assigning responsibility for the war to England and France. The Congress has also revised its policy of boycotting the fascist and nazi exhibitions. The Congress no longer supports the cause of free artists.' Boswell quoted the rebel artists: 'We therefore declare our secession from the Congress and call on fellow artists within and outside us to join in considering ways and means of furthering mutual interests which the Congress can only damage'.
 129. Davis also later resigned from the American Artists' Congress but apparently not for any explicitly political reason. He is quoted as leaving for 'organisational reasons' in Art Digest, *ibid.*..
 130. According to McKinzie, Somervelle had turned his censorious attention to Henkel's mural because 'not only had Henkel failed to sign the proper oaths, but his four panels contained figures suspiciously like Lenin and a Soviet plane with a red star. In the furor that followed, Somervelle admitted to a reporter "as a painter, I'm a good bricklayer". He should have added, the artist Rockwell Kent told Harrington [a WPA administrator] "as a detective, I'm an ass". Henkel, backed by his CIO-affiliated union, explained that the figure in the mural was Franz Reichelt, an early parachutist, and they produced the photograph used as the model. The Soviet plane was an American-made Vulzee; another photograph was shown as evidence. And the red star on white background was the error of an assistant who reversed the colors of the star emblem of the US Navy Reserve. More important to Somervelle were the facts that Henkel had not signed the oaths and that the Flatbush Chamber of Commerce and the local American Legion had registered disapproval of the work. Somervelle ordered Henkel fired, the panels taken down

- and three of them burned', New Deal For Artists, p.165.
131. Ofcourse, the 'public' here refers to Somervelle himself.
 132. 'The Case Of The Bitten Hand' Art Digest August 1940; vol.xiv, no.18.(Peyton Boswell)
 133. *ibid.*..
 134. *ibid.*..'It would be unfortunate if the present hysteria against communist termites were used to wreck the Art Project, as the Theatre Project was'..
 135. Morris to Woodward, March 4th 1937. FVOC/1085/AAA.
 136. Parker to Morris, October 29th 1937. FVOC/1085/AAA.
 137. BA/2976/AAA.
 138. Again, the political alliance between the socialist and communist activists with New Dealers permitted a parallel and ambiguous 'stagism' to develop - either the stagism of transformations in modes of production or in New Deal constitutionalism (the progress from an anarchic and 'inhumane' free-enterprise system to a statified and ordered, if not planned social order).
 139. 'Dedicated To The New Deal'.
 140. 'To The American People' Art Front May 24th 1939.
 141. *ibid.*..
 142. *ibid.*..
 143. See Daniel Aaron, Writers On The Left, Chapter 9.
 144. Daily Worker March 28th 1938. EMCC/D374/AAA.
 145. Catalogue to 'Art Of/By/For The People', exhibition at the American Labor Party Club, sponsored by Rockwell Kent, Lynd Ward, Paul Strand, Elizabeth McCausland, Raphael Soyer, Martha Dodd, etc. EMCC/D374/AAA.
 146. *ibid.*..
 147. *ibid.*..
 148. *ibid.*..'The collaboration of artists with labor, is, therefore, a hopeful omen both for art and for the people'.
 149. Daily Worker review by Jacob Kainen (no date). EMCC/D374/AAA.
 150. This group is discussed in the Conclusion.
 151. *ibid.*..
 152. *ibid.*..'How can any artist see Matisse and Roualt as merely "technical experimenters" and Cezanne and Seurat as merely possessing "an unerring sense of style that they imparted to their technical researches" is certainly something new in cold bloodedness'.
 153. *ibid.*.. 'The group seems a bit too heavy with articulate people who have anarchic political views. These people give a false impression of the character of the group by their disproportionate influence, owing less to their abilities as artists than to their outlets for literary expression'.
 154. The Stuart Davis papers in the Archives Of American Art were still restricted when this research was carried out. His membership of the American Communist Party is unclear.
 155. Post (New York) no date. 'Stuart Davis Criticises Critics Of Abstract Art'. EMCC/D374/AAA.
 156. *ibid.*.. He continued 'In closing I wish to say that I am not at this time a member of the American Abstract

- Artists. Nor do I agree with most of the theoretical opinions of its members as set forth in the catalog. But the organisation has a significance apart from the individual opinions of its members and I believe that its existence holds promise of valuable contribution to the development of American art'.
157. In an article entitled 'Abstract Painting Today', a manuscript submitted for the ill-fated Art For The Millions book produced by the Federal Art Project to show the work produced by federal artists. He continued 'In mural painting it was the same thing; on the one hand - American history in costume, cowboys and indians, frontier days, picturesque industrial landscapes and on the other hand Mexican muralism, the allegorical worker of bulging muscles and Graeco-Roman profile, the fetish of fresco, etc....'
 158. See Introduction, note 8.
 159. According to a poster produced by a group called The Workers Alliance, Congress 'had passed a law preventing noncitizens and communists from getting jobs on WPA. But they won't stop there! They started with noncitizens three years ago, now it is communists and other minority groups. Tomorrow they will outlaw the unions. Tomorrow they will smash WPA. Tomorrow they will force us back to work on armaments projects at the same miserable low wages....'
 160. EMcC/D374/AAA. In the Artists' Congress News, April 1940, an article appeared called 'Calling All Redskins: What Is American Art?' It said 'Is American art menaced by alien trends?...The consensus was that the gravest threat to American art comes from those flag-waving patriots who, while crying loudly about the "alien menace" are themselves leading the attack upon freedom of expression in America..!In the field of art criticism', said Stuart Davis, "one of the outstanding alien menaces to American art is that prominent fellow traveller of reaction - Thomas Craven. The nationalistic and race hatred of Craven is echoed by other writers, such as Peyton Boswell and his Art Digest and by Henry McBride in the New York Sun and Charles Bulliet of the Chicago Daily News'' EMcC/D374/AAA.
 161. See Frank Freidel The New Deal In Historical Perspective.
 162. Art Front November 1934.
 163. See note 138 and Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, Chapter 2.
 164. In a report to the American Artists' Congress. EMcC/D374/AAA.
 165. 'A Call To A Congress Of American Artists' In Defense Of Culture', June 6th, 7th, 8th 1941. JL/483/AAA.

CONCLUSION

'...WEAPONS AS NECESSARY AS ARMS'

In March 1942 the Works Projects Administration Art Program became the Graphic Section Of The War Services Program. All of the state-wide Federal Art Projects were closed by February 1st 1943. Over twenty two thousand plates and several thousand photographs produced by the Index Of American Design were deposited at the Metropolitan Museum Of Art in New York City in the summer of 1942¹. In a report entitled 'Art In National Defense' it is apparent that the residue of the Project workers became involved in such activities as camouflage design, map making, drawing for instruction of various kinds, such as for the Manual Of Arms and for lecture purposes, photography, cultural/recreational activities for the army in art centres, the decoration of canteens and hostess houses, etc². By the end of 1941, 80 per cent of Project work had been produced for the National Defense programme. Federal artists were also employed in the production and illustration of government propaganda booklets printed in California, in a series entitled Problems In The Pacific: A Study Of American Defense³. These activities should be properly understood as 'informational' or 'documentary' - not to suggest any neutral status or function - but to distinguish them from any conception of 'artistic production' mobilised by the Federal Art Project and its particular array of operations and discourses. They are appropriately considered functional within the 'covert surveillance' model adumbrated in Chapter 6, -though the varieties of instances

discussed make it impossible to reduce any form to any other or to a necessary form within that model. In this modulation within strategic defense policy, many artists' groups were complicit: with the splitting of the American Artists' Congress and the 'destalinisation' of the marxist left in the United States from 1938 onwards, many groups moved closer to an uncritical support for the U.S. war effort ⁴ . In 1942 the Artists' Council For Victory was formed from two previous groupings called the Artists' Society For National Defense and the National Art Council For Defense. According to an article, two 'Art-In-Defense' shows held at the National Gallery Of Art in Washington, demonstrated that artists were:

'alive to their job in the fight against fascism. Alive with patriotism which stirs their souls to produce their best work...a declaration that artists can produce weapons as necessary as arms' ⁵

In a conference called by a Co-ordinating Committee Of Artists' Groups in November 1941, it was proposed that artists 'must play their part in the national emergency'. As Americans and as artists, 'we loyally desire to use our talents for national defense' ⁶ . Here, reconstituted, is an equivalence discourse operating the familiar displacement from the subject-position 'artist' to that of both 'citizen' and 'worker', constructing Nation, State, Territory and History as nodal points in the State's hegemonic war discourse. However, unlike the Federal Art Project and the New Deal's discursive articulation of the function of the State in a peacetime economy, this 'defence discourse' constructs these equivalent subject-positions as

peculiar to a State-at-War, in a 'national emergency' when the classic non-interventionist and laissez faire discourse was necessarily - and only temporarily - suspended ⁷ .

NATIONAL ART WEEK AND CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

While, on the one hand, this move was made to incorporate artists fully as workers in the nation's war effort, on the other hand, a contemporary move was being made to reinstate artists fully in 'civil society', the 'free market' and the determinations of private capital. Towards this end, and as a reaction against five years of the Federal Art Project, 'National Art Week' was conceived in 1940. Francis Henry Taylor, the director of the Metropolitan Museum Of Art was made the National Committee chairman for Art Week, while Alfred H. Barr Jr., from the Museum Of Modern Art, became the New York City Council For Art Week chairman. According to Barr, the purpose of the Week - to become an annual event - was to:

'bring to the attention of people everywhere the works of American artists and craftsmen in a manner which will encourage the purchase of American art for every home...' 8

According to Jane DeHart Mathews National Art Week did not, despite the fact that graphic reproductions sold for as little as two dollars, produce a 'work of art for every home' ⁹ . In fact, the following year, the major art purchaser turned out to be the man who served as the second chairman, Thomas J. Watson, the president of I.B.M. ¹⁰ . He bought six works worth two thousand five hundred dollars, while his corporation had bought a total

of twenty five thousand dollars worth ¹¹ .

What National Art Week represented was the attempt to re-articulate the production and patronage of contemporary art within social and economic relations between private individuals and private corporations. It was also the attempt to position contemporary artists as once again dependent on a market and individual buyers, in opposition to the Federal Art Project's regularised wage-system which enabled artists to produce work and associate with other artists around a variety of issues both directly economic and political. According to an article written by Elizabeth McCausland, the National Art Week Committee had mobilised every important figure in the museum and dealer world ¹² . With almost no representation of artists on any of the committees, McCausland was sure that Art Week was designed to return:

'the artist to his previous condition of servitude, to that free market in which he has the glorious liberty of starving ¹³ to death'

Art Week, she said, takes place one week out of fifty two. Prices range from one dollar to ten thousand dollars. McCausland mockingly recorded that if an artist sells one work a year for a dollar, it was hard to see how he had improved his lot. If he could sell a work for ten thousand, it was difficult to see how he needed the help of a National Art Week ¹⁴ .

More importantly, McCausland thought the Art Week had been deliberately planned to exclude Federal Art Project artists from participation, despite the fact that the technical and administrative work was being undertaken by the

Federal Art Project staff ¹⁵ . Fortune magazine stationery had been used for all National Art Week mailing in New York City, thus 'bringing into play the power and prestige of this publication' ¹⁶ . Instead of the Federal Art Project being strengthened and made a permanent part of the Federal Government, National Art Week was creating the impression that these 'sporadic' and 'casual' sales could really bring economic security to the artists in America. They were merely enlarged and ballyhoed versions of the old Washington Square art market ¹⁷ .

But McCausland and those defending the Federal Art Project and the realist representational modes which it engendered - from the socialist realist painters to the New Deal realists - now found themselves in an even smaller minority and in a political context where any form of 'State Art' was considered contiguous with communism or fascism ¹⁸ . With America's war-time propaganda machine producing 'America' as Freedom and Toleration, any critical 'social painting' became seen as a dissembling force.

According to Peyton Boswell in Art Digest, in January 1940:

'the painter will always have to please atleast a few people or earn his living in some other way if he does not want to starve. He remains a rugged individualist in England, France and the U.S.. Ofcourse, democracy has its abuses, but with all its faults, we like it...To be progressive in art is not to be Communazi. Lets retain tolerance'

19

Quoting approvingly the artist Peppino Mangravite, Boswell declared that too much stress had been placed on such themes as 'the dying worker and the broken barn and the devastated field' ²⁰ . America, through rearmement had recovered and grown. Political and social cohesion had

returned to the Nation and the People. Misled and wrong was the 'proletarian school' who felt that by depicting 'temporary strife' or a 'dejected worker', they prepared the way for Marxist revolution ²¹ . America's regeneration had been because of, rather than despite the capitalist system. The New Deal and the communists had got it all wrong: religion and charity were the proper ways to redemption. According to the critic Henry McBride:

'It is the same fallacy our friends, the communists, stumble into. They want somebody else to give. They want Mr. Rockefeller to give. It never dawns on them that the true communist - if it were possible to conceive of such an individual - would consider it a privilege to give to Mr. Rockefeller'

22

It becomes evident that within this developing schema of 'liberal' political, moral and aesthetic efficacies that a rejection of communism and any critical stance in relation to American monopoly capitalism before or even during the Depression, is concomitant with an equally uncritical art, one which, in a sense, could be said to have no 'object-ion'. This was the condition, not for a necessary advocacy of an 'abstract' representational mode, but the clearing of an ideological space within which such an advocacy could become articulated as necessary. It was also a development which allowed an emergent tradition of modernist discourse in American art to grow and which, for four years already, had fought for visibility and support both on and outside the Federal Art Project ²³ .

'DEMOCRATIC ECLECTICISM' AND THE 'RETURN TO AESTHETICS'

In Art Digest in January 1940, it was reported that Elizabeth McCausland, the champion of the 'social protest' painters, believed that a new phase of realist art had developed. The 'compulsive dogma' and 'easy formulas and solutions' of the first phase had been ridden out ²⁴ . By May of the same year Peyton Boswell declared that the 'American Scene' had been rightfully shelved. A 'return to aesthetics' had and should continue to take place in American art ²⁵ . According to Boswell the end of the Federal Art Project also meant the end of 'the thirties':

'The cry is for beauty. Beauty, not in the academic sense of the term but beauty in all that it can mean to the creative artist - beauty with all the connotations that through the centuries had made the easel painting chief outlet for man's deepest desires for self-expression' 26

The easel painting, which for McCausland and the Federal Art Project had been the material symbol of the alienation of both artist and art work from the people, was for Boswell returned as the touchstone of 'artistic freedom' and individual expression. The 'fog of gloom that shrouded American painting during the terrible thirties' should now be lifted ²⁷ . According to Dorothy Grafly, reviewing the 135th Pennsylvania Academy Annual Exhibition, 'a little more art for art sake' acts as an excellent balance for 'subject for subject sake' ²⁸ . Boswell reported that the two words 'liberal' and 'American Scene' had worn themselves out during the 1930s. Both were ready for the scrap heap: the 'left' and 'right' had completed their circle and

met at the bottom; the search for the 'American Scene' had been successful and it was time to 'unfurl the banner' ²⁹ . This authentic 'American Scene' however was better named an 'American Realism', for to produce:

'a real work of art [you] must go beyond mere literal transcription of nature and encompass within its fabric general emotional and aesthetic experience' ³⁰

With the end of the Federal Art Project and the lurching of the left in America from neo-Trotskyism to a 'liberal disengagement' from the 'statization' of the Federal Art Project, critics like Boswell and Watson advised artists to rediscover the full panoply of their creative capacities and to relish their freedoms denied to artists in Europe ³¹ . No longer 'worker', no longer 'slave' ³² .

This freedom, according to the artist Elizabeth Olds, also meant freedom from representing objects. 'Some artists smudged out any part of their picture that represented a recognisable object. This would be illustration, they said' ³³ . 'Government support' for art now meant 'Government interference'; in other lands, one writer said, this had been used for the destruction of liberty:

'the true artist doesn't want to be encouraged. He is an internal combustion engine. For every great artist produced by spoon feeding, I'll show you 500 who found their own nourishment' ³⁴

Despite the efforts of the Federal Art Project to 'normalise' or 'synchronise' the relations of artistic production with the industrial wage-labour form and to fully socialise art as an integral component of community and culture, art constantly and resiliently re-emerges as different and antagonistic to the regulation and discipline of urban

industrial capitalist production. Its peculiar 'otherness' as a mode of material production and consumption mirrors the peculiar alienation of the artist subject-position in twentieth century American monopoly capitalism: resistant to location in any equivalential discourse and constituting a space and practice outside the Social ³⁵ .

The dimensions of this discursively-constructed realm of artistic freedom also embraced a celebration of American art's new-found eclecticism, in opposition to the totalitarian prescriptions of European fascism and Soviet communism. In America this eclecticism was partially constructed as having developed despite the interventions of the Federal Art Project ³⁶ . In an exhibition called 'Trends In American Painting Of Today' held at the City Art Museum in St. Louis in 1942, no less than seven discernable styles of representation were identified: 'realism', 'romanticism', 'expressionism', 'fantasy', 'surrealism', 'abstraction' and 'primitivism'. This diversity revealed, the catalogue said, an 'inescapable truth about American painting':

'its persistent and amazing diversity, a diversity that pertains to the elements of style, content and expression' ³⁷

This diversity defined freedom. Only two years after the demise of the Federal Art Project, it was possible for this writer to say that the artist had been 'almost totally liberated from the demands of society...he had only himself to answer to' ³⁸ . The artist in America in 1942 created for his own sake, in an increasingly subjective and personal way. His greatest asset 'is his individuality' ³⁹ . More even than this, American art began to be seen as internationally

superior, with the 'twin tyrannies' of Europe consummating their 'unholy mating' and requiring American artists to revalue their 'heritage, freedom, culture and tolerance' ⁴⁰ .

Such 'freedom' and 'tolerance', according to the artist Rosalynd Bengelsdorf Browne, had already well-developed on the New York City Federal Art Project, with its careful support for the American Abstract Artists Group, formed in 1936. The Federal Art Project, especially through the New York City easel painting division headed by Burgoyne Diller, had both allowed and nurtured the growth of artists committed to modernist practice. Indeed, their progress on the Federal Art Project was in marked contrast with their attempts to gain private institutional and critical attention. Despite two exhibitions in 1937, seven in 1938 and two in 1939, the group experienced reluctance by the Museum Of Modern Art to show any interest in a group of American abstract painters ⁴¹ . This led to a demonstration outside the Museum in 1940 at which the artists distributed a broadsheet attacking the institution's attitude ⁴² . In fact, in the Museum Of Modern Art's exhibition of federal art in 1936, Sidney Geist recalled that not reproduced in the catalogue were the abstract murals produced by James Brooks, Ilya Bolotowsky, Byron Browne, Stuart Davis, Balcombe Greene, Arshile Gorky, Willem deKooning and George McNeil ⁴³ . In an article entitled 'Abstract Art And The WPA', Rosalynd Bengelsdorf Browne said that the Federal Art Project had allowed the American Abstract Artists Group to benefit most from a condition wherein art was created 'almost without censorship' and that Burgoyne Diller had,—despite the alien employment

regulation, got deKooning a job painting murals at the New York World Fair ⁴⁴ . She later said in an interview in 1977 that the eventual critical and institutional success of the post-war American Abstract Expressionists had taken place and had been contrived at the expense of those abstract artists who had painted in New York before the war and who had been associated with the politics surrounding the defence of the Federal Art Project in the late 1930s ⁴⁵ .

THE STATE AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

This substantive separation of the history of the post-war American Abstract Expressionists from the Federal Art Project and the politics of the New Deal in the late 1930s was the outcome of the emergent and soon to be dominant belief that the Project had curtailed freedoms, distorted the normative relation of the modern artist to society (through the very attempt to dissolve the antagonism artist/society) and had made 'individual expression' and 'formal experimentation' all but impossible ⁴⁶ . With the hegemonic rhetoric of 'aesthetic quality' and authentic 'American' expression characteristic of post-war modernist histories and criticism, the Federal Art Project's central motifs of 'cultural democracy' and 'social function' became constructed as 'alien', 'impossible' and dangerous demands made upon the individual artist. The role of the State in mobilising cultural production for the hegemonic representation of Nation, People and History became seen as anachronistic as the

New Deal's attempt to restructure the relation between the State - as 'the embodiment of the interests of the People' - and the crisis-ridden capitalist system ⁴⁷ .

As the revisionist history of post-war American painting has shown, however, the State's operations and active mobilisations of cultural production in constructing both internal national and external international hegemony did not end with the Federal Art Project or the War Services Division ⁴⁸ . By turns, both covert and explicit, the State's economic, political and ideological investment in visual representation has grown, complexified and become a permanent structural feature of late twentieth century societies. These investments should become a central object of study and vigilance for cultural critics and historians everywhere.

Notes To Conclusion

1. Jane deHart Mathews, op cit., p.333.
2. In Dorothy C. Miller The United States Government Art Projects: A Brief Summary p.12.
3. Artists were used to produce representations of maps of the Pacific, Phillipine islanders, U.S. buildings, etc.
4. With the Soviet Union's entry into the war after being invaded by Germany, Mrs. Lyman R. Bradley became chairperson of an organisation for Russian war relief. A letter from her to the artist Julian Levi, in December 1942 said: 'This is Thanks To Russia Month. The artists in America are doing their part through the Arts For Russia project. One of the major events will be an auction of paintings, watercolors, gouaches, etc, held by the Greenwich Village-Gramercy Park committee on December 20th 1942, 3pm at 1 fifth avenue'. JL/483/AAA.
5. American Artists Committee Bulletin March 1942, New York.
6. Conference called by Co-ordinating Committee, November 3rd 1941.
7. See Frank Freidel The New Deal In Historical Perspective p.8.
8. Alfred H. Barr Jr. to Julian Levi, September 19th 1940. JL/483/AAA.
9. op cit., p.332.
10. ibid..
11. The Metropolitan Museum bought six works for 5000 dollars. According to Dorothy Miller, op cit., 130,000 works were shown in 1641 exhibitions.
12. Article entitled 'Art Week' (no date) EMCC/D371/AAA.
13. ibid.. She continued 'publically-spirited people are going to do good for the artist. A glorified charity bazaar will lift them from their "marginal" state'.
14. ibid..
15. ibid..
16. ibid..
17. ibid..
18. Milton Brown distinguishes atleast three groupings of 'realist' painters in the 1930s. See The Modern Spirit: American Painting 1908-1935.
19. 'Red Herrings' Art Digest January 1940; vol.xiv, no.7. He continued 'The Argonaut critic emphasises the fallacy of such a premise by pointing out that "Red" art, to survive in any totalitarian country cannot be modern, radical or even progressive. In San Francisco, artists select their techniques and subjects with complete freedom; in Russia, points out Wessels, only conservatism is permitted in technique and subject matter is state directed...The sickly, overgrown illustrations that passed as art in the Soviet Pavilion at the New York World Fair last summer demonstrated simon-pure "red art" - far cry from the progressive expression of a free democfatic people...The artistic devices used under Hitler and Mussolini can hardly be distinguished from those in fashion in Russia...'
20. Art Digest December 1939; vol.xiv, no.6
21. ibid.. 'For an appreciation which grows with art', the article continued, because it has 'better taste in art and is more sophisticated in its judgements...Mangravite recommends the American middle class...'
22. 'Religion 1940 Version' Art Digest April 1940; vol.xiv, no.12

23. The American Abstract Artists Group had been formed in 1936, according to Rosalynd Bengelsdorf Browne.
24. '"Social Protesters" Become "New Realists"' Art Digest January 1940; vol.xiv, no.7.
25. 'Shelving The American Scene' Art Digest May 1940; vol. xiv, no.15.
26. 'Return To Aesthetics' Art Digest February 1940; vol. xiv, no.7.: 'The Leftwing called the former 'graphic art', the Rightwing labelled the latter "Just bad illustration". Now the middle asks to be heard, demands that artists be artists, not politicians or cartoonists'
27. *ibid.*
28. *ibid.* 'Maybe this 1940 trend is just another manifesto of the "pure art" factor so noticeable in the Toledo Annual last year...That old Ivory Tower did have its points...'
29. Art Digest May 1940; vol.xiv, no.15.
30. *ibid.*
31. Jane deHart Mathews, *op cit.*, says 'and in the post-war climate of disengagement, the vision of integration which had once been so inspiring seemed as dated as a 1935 copy of "New Masses"', p.339.
32. American (Chicago) May 13th 1938: 'Now art can be a wonderful thing...But these so-called Federal Art Projects...Are they art?...No, just bunk...Government interference, Mr. Pollock tells you, strangles real art which must spring from real minds, following the way of their own inspiration. It is true. It is also true that government interference with art in other lands has been one of the methods used for the destruction of liberty...The true artist doesn't want to be encouraged' HC/1109/AAA.
33. Statement by Elizabeth Olds, 1973. BA/2976/AAA.
34. Channing Pollock, quoted in Newark News May 20th 1938.
35. See Chapter 6, note 1.
36. The modernist revision of the 1930s is at work in the catalogue The 1930s: Painting And Sculpture In America (Whitney Museum Of American Art; New York, 1968), essay by William C. Agee.
37. Catalogue by Perry T. Rathbone.
38. *ibid.* 'He is a free-lance, privileged to express himself as his artistic impulses dictate. He creates for his own sake and for those who will follow him, but he does not paint for society's sake'.
39. *ibid.*
40. 'Carnegie International' Art Digest November 1939; vol. xiv, no.3. Boswell continues: '[_ Europe_] has tossed the torch of creative experiment to the long extended hand of the New York World Fair...we have accepted stewardship'
41. RBB/213/AAA.
42. From Susan CL Larsen 'The American Abstract Artists: A Documentary History 1936-51', in RBB/213/AAA. 'In 1939 the Museum had presented 'Art In Our Time' which, if interpreted literally, might have led the public to anticipate a more contemporary display than the canvases of Harnett, Homer, Laforge, Sargent and other nineteenth century and early twentieth century Americans shown together with works by Picasso, Braque, Leger and other modern European masters'.

43. 'Prelude: The 1930s' Arts Magazine, September 1956.
44. In a research paper prepared for the National Endowment For The Arts. RBB/214/AAA.
45. Bengelsdorf Browne to Professor Peter Walsh, University Of New Mexico, Albuquerque, November 28th 1977. RBB/213/AAA
46. For an account of the hegemony of Modernist history of twentieth century American art, see Jonathan Harris 'Art, Histories, Politics: The New Deal Art Projects And American Modernism', Ideas And Production 5, Spring 1986.
47. Ofcourse, systematic State intervention has continued and grown in the post-war period, but the nature of its representation by the State has changed.
48. For relevant essays on the State and Abstract Expressionism, see Francis Frascina Pollock And After: The Critical Debate.

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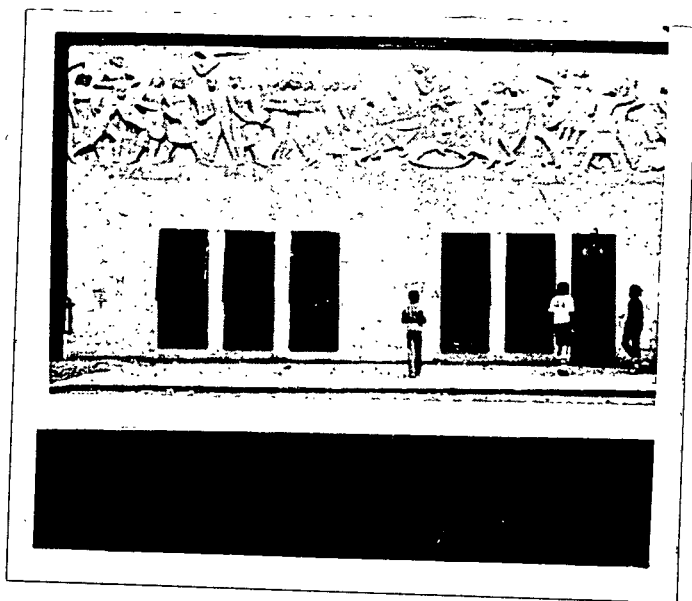
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ILLUSTRATIONS



Illus.1 Cesare Stea Community Life or Family Life And Recreation; cast stone, 1940.



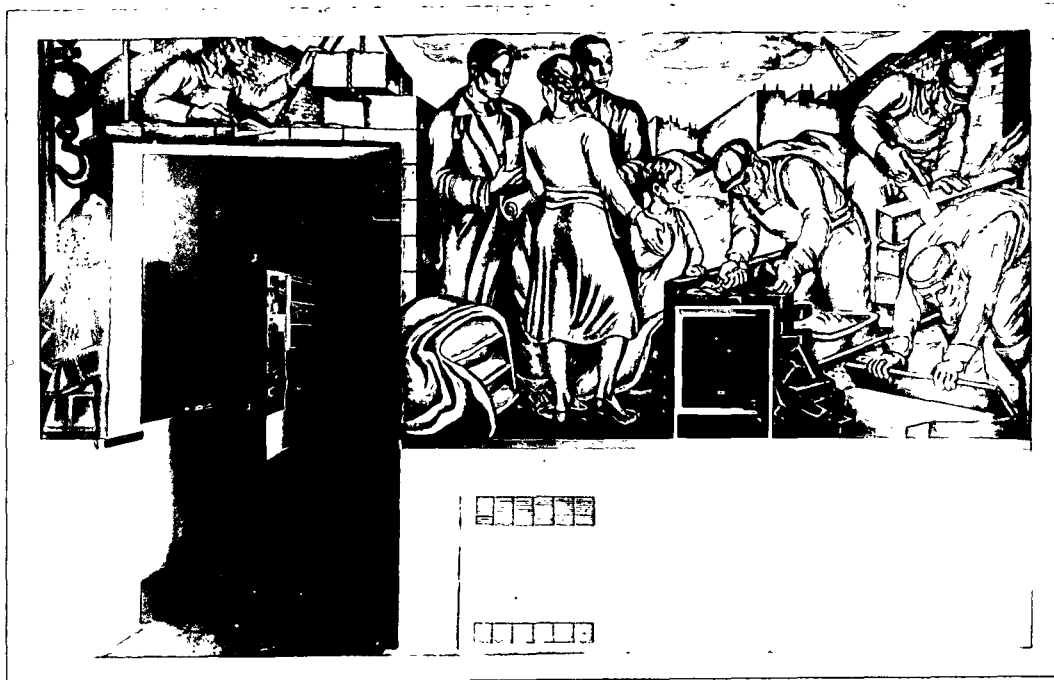
Illus.2 Adolf Wolff Monkey; stone, 1938.



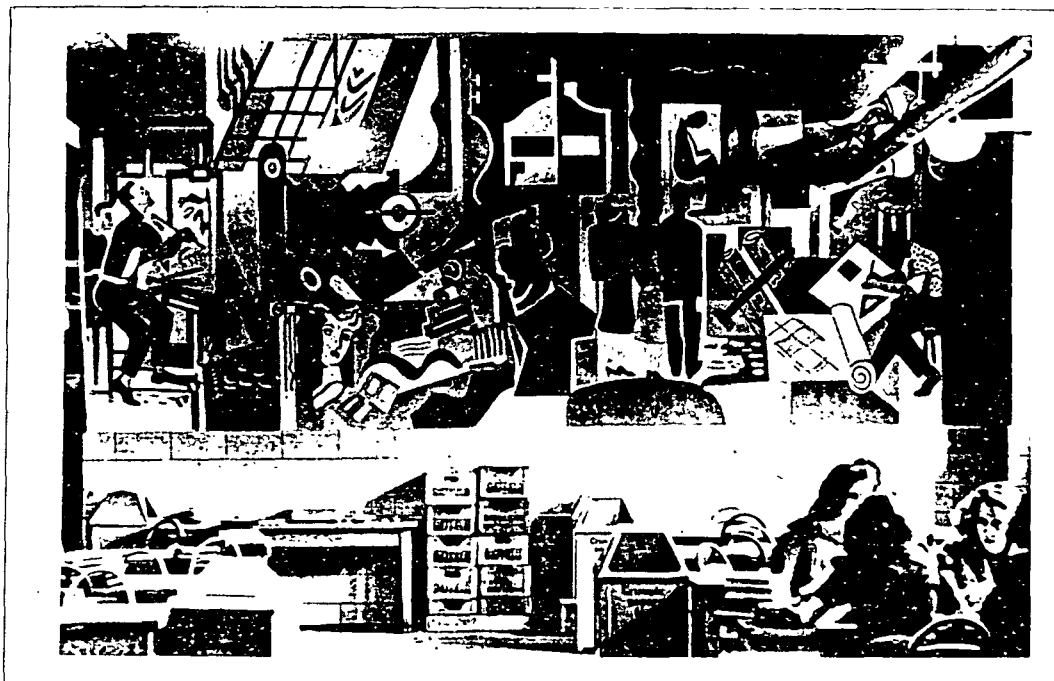
Illus.3 Muriel Brennecke Hippo; stone, 1937.



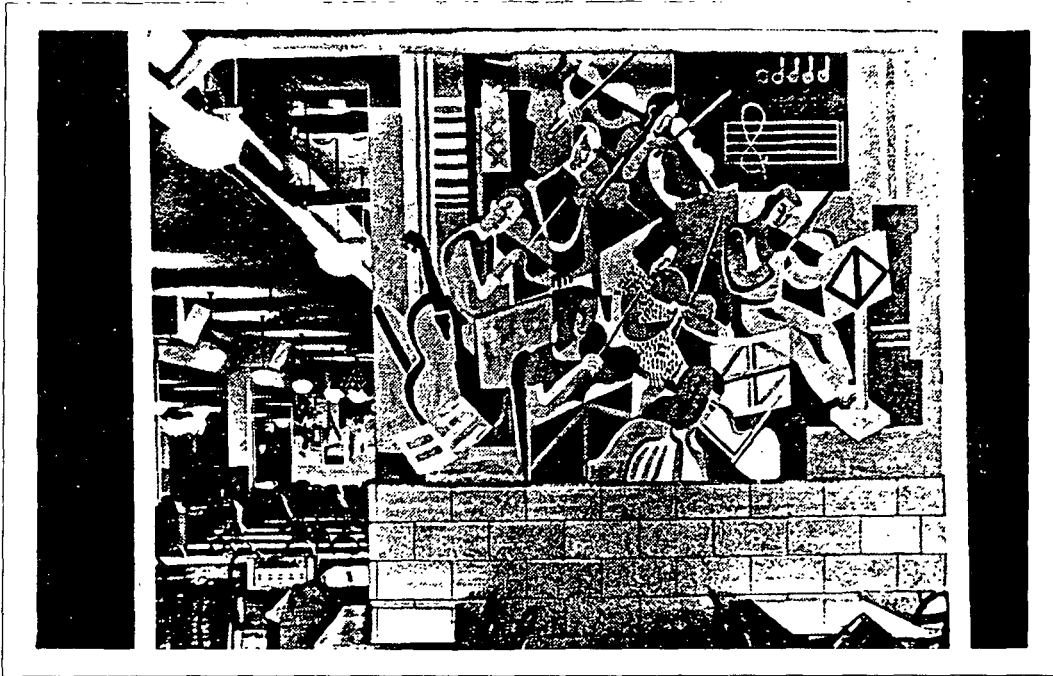
Illus.4 Philip Guston Work And Play; tempera on wall, 1940.



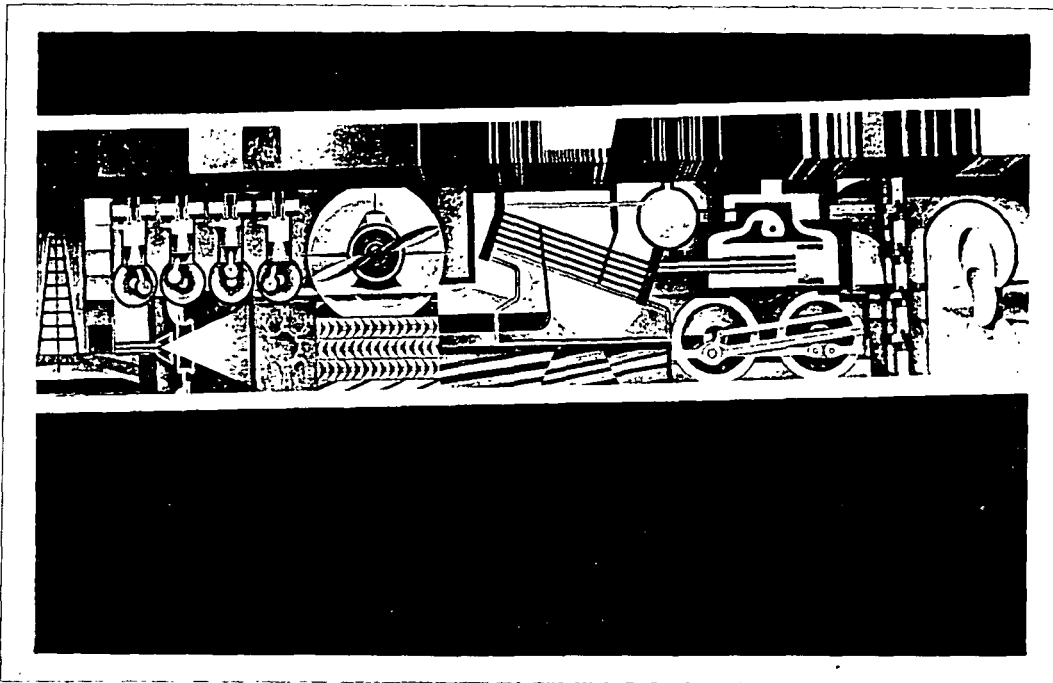
Illus.5 Marion Greenwood Blueprint For Living;
tempera on wall, 1940.



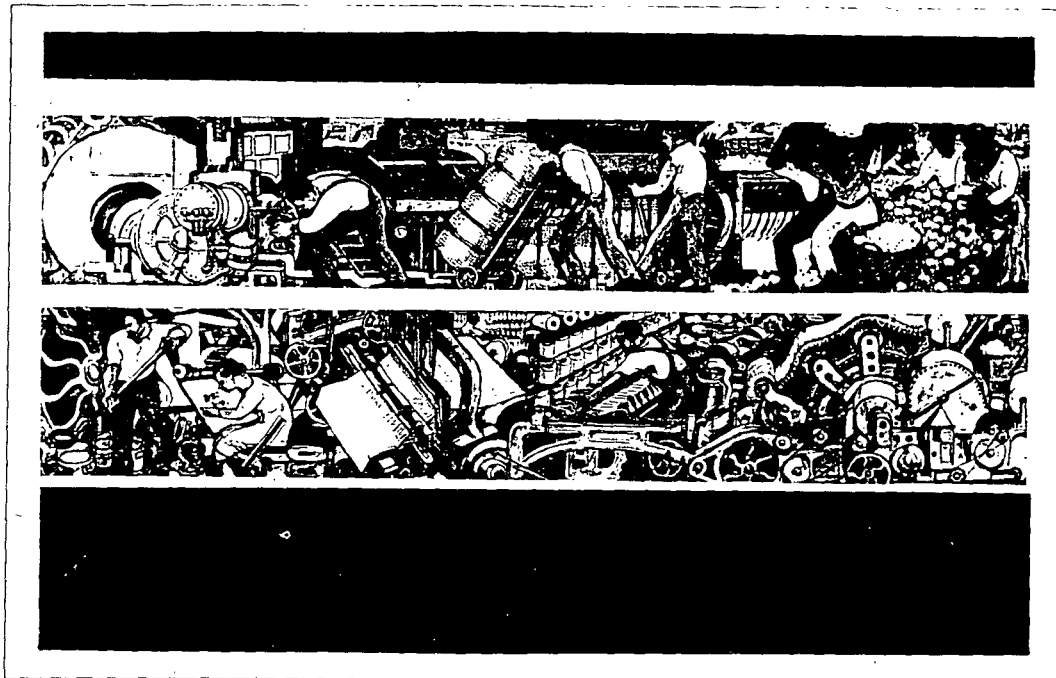
Illus.6 Ruth Reeves Student Activities In School;
luminal on wall; 1940.



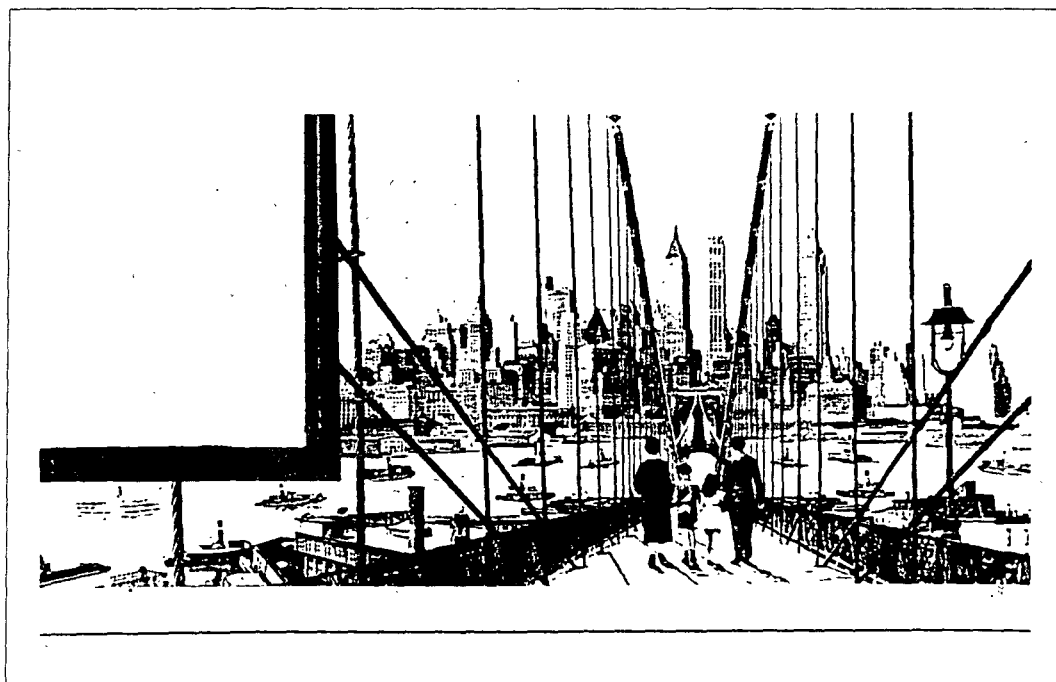
Illus.7 Lucienne Bloch Music Mural; tempera on wall, 1936-8.



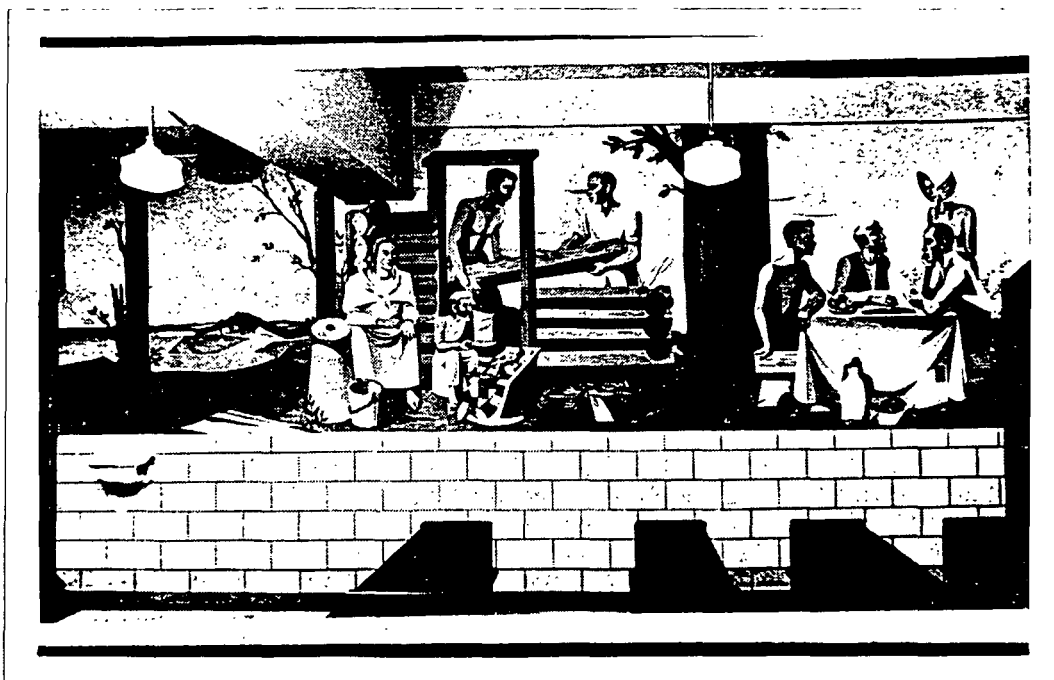
Illus.8 Eric Mose Power; casein on gesso, 1936.



Illus.9. Paul Lawler and Geoffrey Norman The History Of The Textile Industry; oil on plaster, 1938.



Illus.10 Alexander Alland Approach To Manhattan; photomural, 1937.



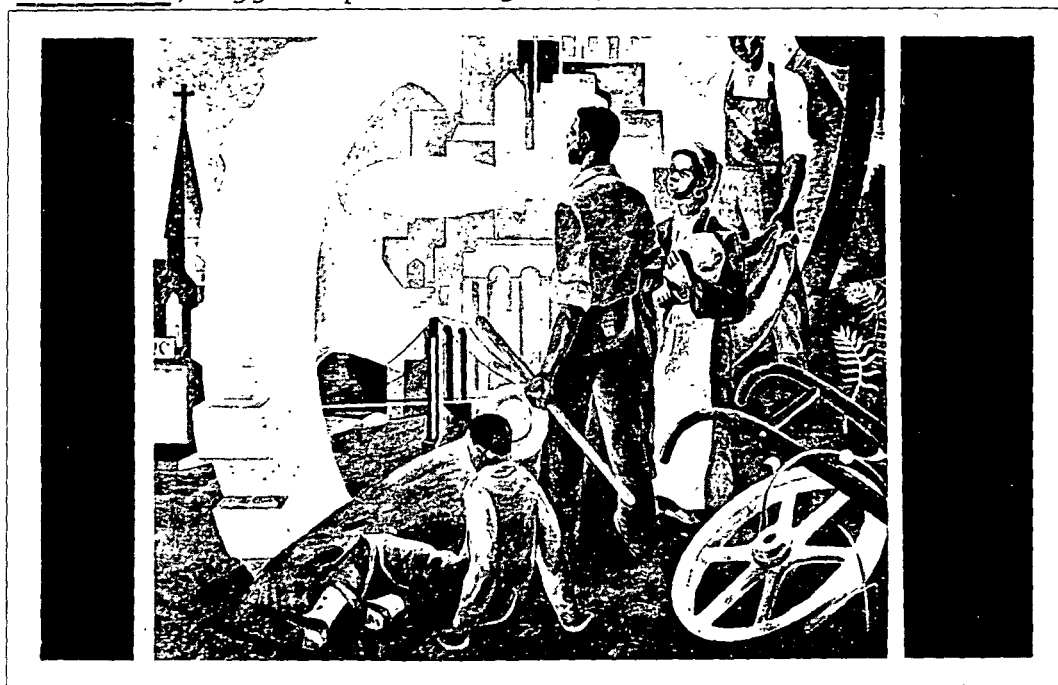
Illus.11 Anton Refregier Home And The Family;
oil on canvas, 1938-42.



Illus.12 Lucienne Bloch Childhood; tempera on wall,
1936.



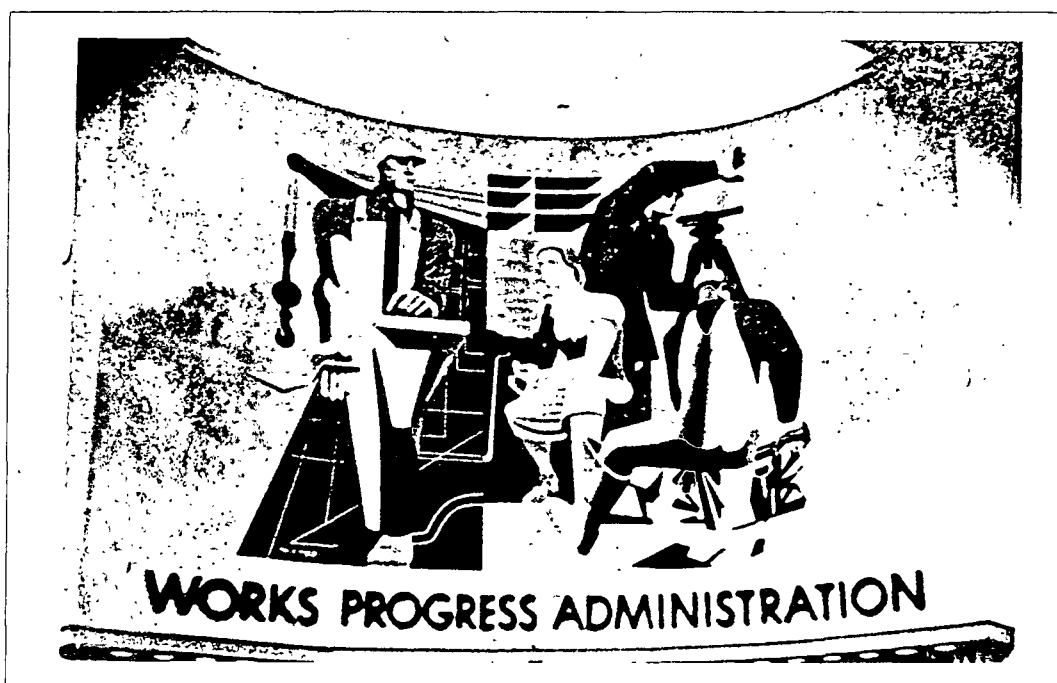
Illus.13 Charles Davis American Industry Between 1875 And 1905; egg tempera on gesso, 1936-7.



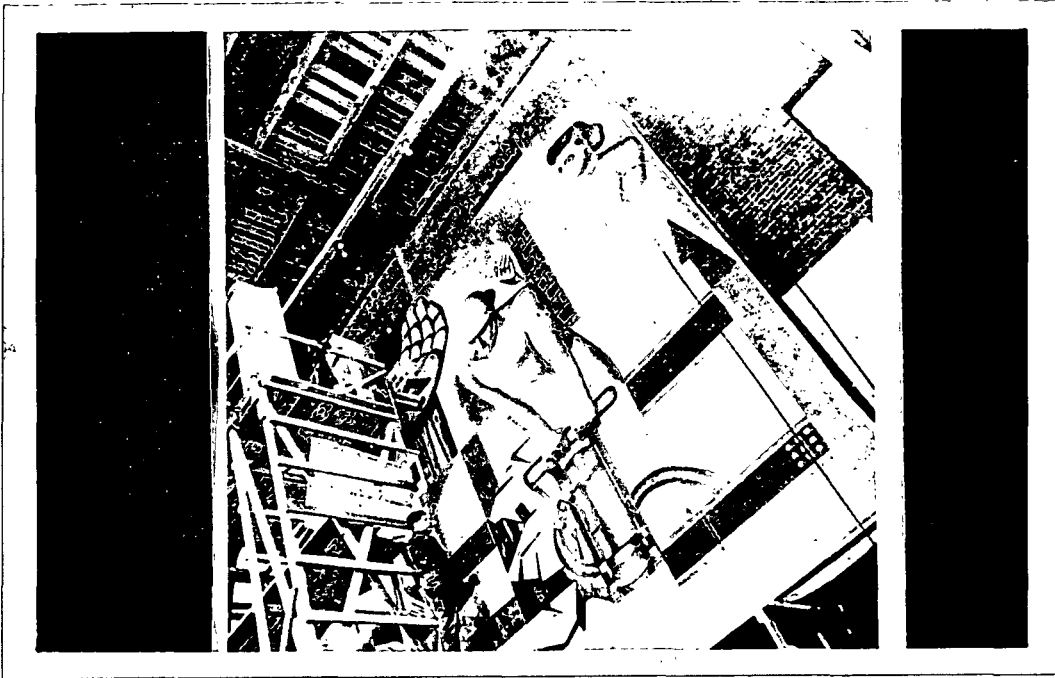
Illus.14 Vertis Hayes The Pursuit Of Happiness; oil on wall and canvas, 1936-7.



Illus.15 Walter Quirt The Growth Of Medicine From Primitive Times; tempera on gesso, 1937.



Illus. 16 Philip Guston Maintaining America's Skills; fresco, 1939.



Illus.17 Seymour Fogel Relation Of WPA To Rehabilitation; fresco, 1939.



Illus.18 Ryah Ludins Recreational Activities Of The WPA; fresco, 1939.



Illus.19 Eric Mose Building And Construction; fresco, 1939.

provided the possibility, if not of their recovery, then of a new basis for community life, and of a consensus to stretch from West to East Coast, from the Canadian border to Mexico, delimiting both a nation of communities and these communities as the nation.

Notes To Chapter 3

1. Indeed, in opposition to the purpose of the Federal Art Project, Jacob Kainen, director of the New York City Federal Art Project Graphic Division, had said that the Public Works Of Art Project 'seemd an autocratic system for the artists' (in O'Connor (ed.) The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology Of Memoirs, p.314). Ed Bruce, director of the project felt 'that the Treasury art programs and especially the Section [Of Painting And Sculpture] were mandated to acquire masterpieces for government' (in O'Connor (ed.) Art For The Millions, p.17 and note 20).
2. For an interesting discussion of monopoly capitalism and its implications for art in America in the 1930s, see the article by Stuart Davis entitled 'Abstract Painting Today', in Art For The Millions, pp.121-131 and especially O'Connor's note which prints an earlier draft by Davis entitled 'Abstract Painting Today - Democracy And Reaction', dated August 11th 1939, and which was not included in the original manuscript for publication.
3. See Dorothy C. Miller The U.S. Government Art Projects: A Brief Summary (excerpts from Colliers Yearbook), no date, but probably 1943.
4. *ibid.*, p.2. As has been seen, a contradiction existed between the conception of the Federal Art Project as primarily a contingent 'relief' operation, dependent on the state of the U.S. economy and the Project's chief architects and administrators who had ambitions and plans to make the Federal Art Project a permanent part of American life.
5. In 1939 after the emergence of the anti-Roosevelt majority in Congress and a growing anti-Communist witch-hunt conducted by House Committees, the Hearst Press and even within the Congress Of Industrial Organisations, the Government was compelled to cut relief appropriations to the Works Progress Administration. The Federal Theatre Project directed by Hallie Flanagan, was abolished in response to the claims that it was Communist-controlled and the Federal Art Project was reorganised as a set of discrete state-wide projects. This is discussed more fully in Chapters 6 and 7.
6. *ibid.*, p.10. After 1941 one hundred Community Art Centres were in operation, provided with local funding by such groups as Local Chambers of Commerce, the Rotary, Women's Clubs and The American Legion. With loss of federal control and sponsorship and with the onset of war, Community Art Centres were turned into recreational centres for soldiers. In 1942, seventeen were liquidated. Others, such as the Southside Community Art Centre in Chicago and The People's Art Centre in St. Louis, were taken over and run by the local black communities.
7. Mary Morsell, in an essay entitled 'The Exhibition Program Of The Federal Art Project', in Art For The Millions, said that 'the idea that art could only flourish on the Atlantic Seaboard was a fallacy, but it was difficult to displace', p.229.
8. Dorothy C. Miller, *op cit.*, p.5.

9. Quoted in Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz New Deal For Art, p.11. It should be kept in mind that, despite the claims of the Federal Art Project to have 'returned' artists to the 'country', some 75% of Federal Art Project personnel were employed in eight metropolitan areas, although Cahill boasted of operations in thirty eight states. According to Jane deHart Mathews, 'Art And The People: The New Deal Quest For A Cultural Democracy', 'economic distress, bureaucratic restrictions and political opposition confined the WPA's performing artists to a few major centers, inaccessible to millions of people for whom these theatres and orchestras had been intended', p.327.
10. Speech by T.C. Parker, deputy Administrator of the Federal Art Project, entitled 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers', June 14th 1938. FVOC/1085/AAA.
11. Lincoln Rothschild, 'The American Artists' Congress', Art For The Millions, pp.251-252.
12. T.C. Parker, 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers'.
13. In an article in Time September 5th 1938; vol.xxxii, no.10, entitled 'WPA Art Director Holger Cahill: His Project To Build A Plateau', the democratising potential of the Federal Art Project was stressed: 'We are told that the Community Art Centers "located mainly in cities where no art museums or schools previously existed... have had an attendance so far of about four million people - almost equal to the combined two year attendance at Manhattan's Metropolitan Museum and Chicago Art Institute'. DCM/1105/AAA.
14. 'Case Histories: Adjustment Of Individuals'. FAP/DC51/AAA.
15. T.C. Parker 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers'.
16. From an article entitled 'The Artist Teaches...' no date or author known. HC/1107/AAA.
17. *ibid.*
18. This will be later characterised as a 'regularity in dispersion', a concept central to Laclau and Mouffe's concept of hegemonic discourse. They in turn pay debt to the formulation of this concept in Michel Foucault's Archeaology Of Knowledge. See Laclau and Mouffe's discussion of this, Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.105-114.
19. 'The Artist Teaches...'
20. Federal Art Project statement, no date, title or author. It continued '...those who suffer from the cultural starvation of districts where purely practical standards prevail'. There is a tension in Federal Art Project discourse between the use of 'practical' in a negative sense, as here, to mean 'crassly materialistic', and its positive opposition to 'contemplative' or the pejorative 'intellectual', terms associated with abstract thought and dependent on an 'aristocratic division of labour' between 'the people' (engaged in materially constructing the world) and an urban intelligentsia (concerned with 'artistic appreciation', etc).

21. T.C. Parker 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers': '...great mass of our people who may be called under-privileged in the arts'.
22. *ibid.* The role of 'scientific experts' in examining the 'needs' of the people and planning 'integrated services' for society will be discussed in Chapter 6. We should also note the strong quantitative sense to the Project's conception of 'culture', with its analogous relation to a quantitative notion of welfare provision (social security, baby foods, etc) and democratic development (extension of franchise, etc).
23. For a brief discussion of these welfare measures and work relief agencies introduced by Roosevelt, see William E. Leuchtenburg Franklin D. Roosevelt And The New Deal 1932-1940 (Harper & Row; New York, 1963), Chapter 6 'One Third Of A Nation', pp.118-142.
24. According to Barton J. Bernstein in 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', Roosevelt did little for black people and didn't even endorse the anti-lynching bill: 'Unwilling to risk schism with Southerners' ruling committees, Roosevelt capitulated to the forces of racism', p.279
25. This document, entitled 'Interesting Facts About The Negro And The WPA' discusses the success or otherwise of the WPA in providing work relief for blacks in America. It touches on discrimination against blacks in private enterprise, racial segregation on the WPA and the rôle of the black population as a reserve army of labour. FVOC/1084/AAA.
26. Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *op cit.*, p.20.
27. *ibid.*, p.20.
28. Speech by T.C. Parker, no title. Given at the General Conference Of The 35th Annual Meeting Of The American Teachers Association, at the Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, on July 29th 1938.
29. *ibid.*
30. *ibid.*
31. *ibid.*
32. 'Case Histories: Adjustment Of Individuals'.
33. 'The Artists Teaches...'
34. *ibid.* The failure of the Socialist and Communist Parties in America to construct a broad popular alliance against both monopoly capital and the increasingly reactionary shifts in Democratic Party policy during the late 1930s can in part be understood as their failure to supercede a traditional 'classist' assumption about the organisation of political alliances. This was in marked contrast to the discursive strategies of the Roosevelt Administrations and their construction of an expansive hegemony articulating class, race, religious and sexual subjects within its populist bloc. For an example of a still prevalent 'classist' perspective on American labour history, see Mike Davis' two-part article 'Why The US Working Class Is Different' and 'The Barren Marriage Of American Labour And The Democratic Party', in New Left Review 123 September-October 1980 and 124 November-December 1980. He argues 'The increasing proletarianisation of the American

- social structure has not been matched by an equal tendency toward the homogenisation of the working class as a cultural or political collectivity. Stratifications rooted in the differential positions in the social labour process have been reinforced by deep-seated ethnic, racial, religious and sexual antagonisms within the working class. In different periods these divisions have fused together as definite intra-class hierarchies (e.g. native + skilled + protestant versus immigrant + unskilled + catholic). The real political power of the working class within American "democracy" has always been greatly diluted by the effective disenfranchisement of large sectors of labour, immigrants, women, migrant workers, among others', p.15.
35. Marlene Park and Geràld E. Markowitz, op cit., p.20.
 36. Speech by T.C. Parker, no title, given at the General Conference Of The 35th Annual Meeting Of The American Teachers Association at the Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, on July 29th 1938.
 37. See note 18. Following Laclau and Mouffe, we can say that this 'regularity', which can also be called a 'unity', is possible among different elements because no element can be understood in abstraction from its location in a particular discourse which articulates its constituent elements as 'moments' integral to the discourse. For example, an ideological element such as 'a class of black child artists in a Harlem Community Art Centre' has no a priori meaning, while if inserted into an ensemble of articulated 'moments', it can either mean a 'proof' of the 'national populism' of Roosevelt's discourse, or, oppositionally, 'proof' of a black separatist discourse articulating cultural practice as an index of autonomous organisation.
 38. ibid..
 39. ibid..
 40. Lawrence A. Jones 'The New Orleans WPA/FAP Project', in Art For The Millions, pp.198-199. He also says 'Believing as I do that the appreciation of art cultivates in man a sincere regard for the contributions of his fellow men, regardless of race or creed, I am trying through my own painting and art to create a more democratic America...On the New Orleans art project we teach art to poor children whose undirected energy might otherwise lead to delinquency...I have been very successful with maladjusted children and general rowdies', p.199.
 41. Untitled paper on Community Art Centres and democracy. NDA/AAA.
 42. ibid..
 43. See Patrick White 'A Blue Plaque For The Labour Movement', Formations Of Nation And People 1984, p.47.
 44. From a paper entitled 'The Development Of Community Art Centers', no author, February 1940. HC/1106/AAA.
 45. From a paper entitled 'Walker Art Center Of The Minnesota Arts Council', by D.S. Defenbacher, no date. HC/1107/AAA.
 46. ibid..
 47. ibid..

48. T.C. Parker 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers'.
49. *ibid.*
50. *ibid.*
51. *ibid.*
52. Louis Guglielmi, 'After The Locusts', in Art For The Millions, p.114. Guglielmi's attack on capitalism is quite explicit: 'The private gallery is an obsolete and withered institution. It does not only encourage private ownership of public property, but it destroyed a potential popular audience and forced the artist into a sterile tower of isolation divorced from society', p.115.
53. See also Beniamino Bufano's article 'For The Present, We Are Busy', in Art For The Millions, pp.107-110: 'How can cultural tastes be developed by a people? How can their lives be made fuller if they have no opportunity to play a part in creating things of beauty? How can a cultural pattern be developed for America if art and the artists are subjugated to the whims and idiosyncrasies of a few overfed decadent merchant princes, carryovers from the days of feudalism?', p.110.
54. For a general discussion of the relationship between art and culture, see A.S. Vasquez Art And Society: Essays In Marxist Aesthetics (Merlin; London, 1965). According to Vasquez 'the threat which constantly hangs over art in capitalist society is precisely this: that it will be treated in the only way that interests a world run by the law of surplus production, that is, according to economic criteria, as wage-labour. It is in this sense that Marx speaks of the hostility of capitalist material production to art, a hostility which is manifest as an attempt to integrate a branch of spiritual production, art, in the world of material production', p.187. Although this is not the view of the author of this thesis, nor possibly derivative from any proper historical materialist method, it could be argued that it broadly articulates the views of Cahill and the long-term policy aims of the Federal Art Project.
55. From 'The Artist Teaches...' The statement continues: '...little boys and girls have, during the last two years, given profound expression to such themes as Robinson Crusoe cast adrift on the desert island; tropical landscapes often conceived on the fire escapes of Brooklyn tenements on a humid summer night; and paintings of flowers and fruit so fresh and strong in color and light that they baffle the careful technique of the intellectual modernist...It is amazing how, under the proper direction, boys who have hitherto given their hero-worship to the much dramatised gangsters of the movies turn their same youthful enthusiasm to team work in creating decorations for their neighbourhood club or settlement house'.
56. *ibid.* This was regarded as a consequence of the change from 'traditional' rural communities to metropolitan life, from the 'natural' to the 'artificial': 'Since the beginning of the industrial era, leading educators have felt, and in recent years, have sought to counteract the

- psychological difficulties which have occurred in America as a result of our all too swift transition from rural realities to the complexities and adjustments of a machineage. Children, more than we realise, have been caught on the very cogwheel of this trying period'. For a useful discussion of this 'rapid transition' and its prodigious symbolic investments, see Alan Trachtenberg The Incorporation Of America: Culture And Society In The Guilded Age (Hill & Wang; New York, 1982), especially Chapter 2: 'Mechanism Takes Command', pp.38-69.
57. The possibility of an 'intelligentsia' in America at all was anathema to the proponents of Frederick Jackson Turner's 'Frontier Thesis' and his characterisation of the 'American Type' as an active, masculine Westerner. According to Trachtenberg, most Americans at the end of the nineteenth century believed the nation's wealth was based on the agriculture of the West and its seemingly unlimited bounties. 'Intellectual' was thought contiguous with 'Eastern' and 'City-Life'. Cities and their intellectuals were to be regarded as parasites on the true 'America' and the authentic people of the West. The massive contradictions to these myths, which Trachtenberg documents - in terms of labour mobility, corporate land=ownership and demographic concentration - did not prevent the universalisation of these myths.
 58. See Holger Cahill, 'American Resources In The Arts', in Art For The Millions, p.37. He continues 'There is nothing like this in the experience of our European stock, save possibly in communities of craftsmen like the Shakers, where craftsmanship was almost a form of worship. There has been, however, in various periods of our past, an honest search for an art that mirrors the everyday experience, the sense and sentiment of the American people', p.37.
 59. Untitled paper on Community Art Centres and democracy.
 60. 'The Artist Teaches...'
 61. *ibid.*
 62. 'The Artist Teaches...' It continues 'He is, indeed, the true artist, working for the joy of creation and seldom lacking in inspiration'. This, ofcourse, seems more like a typification of modernist practice. The effect of photography on Federal Art Project thinking has yet to be discussed, but it is an issue which arises in relation to the type of representation demanded by the 'documentary' requirements of the Index Of American Design (see Chapter 5). However, the role of drawing and painting survives, despite the 'passing of realism and general recognition that photography had definitely displaced purely descriptive painting, the artist of today has sought true interpretative values which, though keyed to the complexities of the modern world, were drawn from the fundamental simplicities of human life...'
 63. *ibid.*
 64. For a discussion of 'the West' as symbol, see Trachtenberg, *op cit.*, Chapter 1 'The Westward Route', pp.11-37. He says 'an invention of cultural myth, the word

- 'West' embraced an astonishing variety of surfaces and practices, of physiognomic differences and sundry exploitations they invited. The Western Lands provided resources essential as much to industrial development after the Civil War as to cultural needs of justification, incentive and disguise', p.17.
65. 'Progress Report - Federal Art Project', November 1937-April 1st 1938. FAP/DC53/AAA. It was said: 'the militant individualism of the early 1900s is rapidly being displaced by a healthy anonymity. When an artist has a public for his art and is assured of economic security he has no need to sit on flag poles to call attention to himself...' This socialisation of the artist had also led to a growing collective cultural activity 'whereas few artists would have heretofore consented to work together on a single mural painting, sculpture, mosaic, poster or colored lithograph, today throughout America numerous artists employed on Government project are working successfully on single creative conceptions'.
 66. *ibid.*
 67. In a paper entitled 'Educational Aspects Of The Federal Art Project', no author, September 11th 1937.DCM/1105/AAA.
 68. Girolamo Piccolo, 'Report To The Sculptors Of The Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project', in Art For The Millions, p.85. Again, 'the Past' is recalled to validate contemporary policy: 'Traditionally sculpture has been a mass art...Today a lifetime is needed to create a reputation that can attract the money and the patronage of the rich. Sculpture was practically an unknown art, as far as the American people were concerned, until the formation of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project', p.83.
 69. Lawrence Vail Coleman, director of the Association of Museums, said 'The Federal Art Project is one of the most important things to happen to American art in a hundred years'. HC/1107/AAA.
 70. Federal Art Project Progress Report, November 1937-April 1st 1938. The statement continued 'It seems likely that the artists of the future who are born and raised in communities like Greenboro, Memphis, Sioux City, Laramie and Norris will be less inclined to trade their birthrites for the tenuous glories of the big city. The provinces of America may yet become as important to the cultural life of America as the provinces of France and Germany are to their respective cultures'.
 71. Bi-Monthly Bulletin Of The Federal Art Project, vol. i, no.3 November 1st 1936. FAP/DC53/AAA. It continued: 'whatever subjects these murals may depict is historically accurate and has meant months of detailed research on the part of the artists. That it will have a significant effect on the student is certain: phantasy will be stimulated, slumbering creative forces released and critical faculties awakened'.
 72. *ibid.* It continued 'sometimes when some of my pupils bring me their work, I am shocked by their strong sense of realism'.

73. Federal Art Project Press Release, January 1st 1939.
74. This is not to deny that the Federal Art Project did not receive extensive and mocking criticism from some quarters. Minerva K. Teichert, from Cokeville, Wyoming, wrote complaining to her senator, on November 16th 1938: 'We have "eight "art centers" in Wyoming. Utah threatens to have more yet. Look at the stuff. See if its worth it. Green men with purple beards, Mexican women, nude with not a human thing about them. Fortunately the music will die and the dancing cease to offend, but the painting endures as a witness against the misspending of our once hard-earned money...If you love the West, and the spirit of thrift and toil that built it, please demand that a few clean places be left to future decorators...Now 100s of 'artists' crop up all over the land and reap a living where they would have done something else before'.
75. HC/1107/AAA. 76. Sophie Steinbach, December 1936.HC/1107/AAA.
77. In a radio speech in April 1932, Roosevelt had said: 'These unhappy times call for the building of plans that rest upon the forgotten, the unorganised, but the indispensable units of economic power, for plans... that build from the bottom up and not from the top down, that put their faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.' The motif of 'The Forgotten Man' became one of Roosevelt's most remembered phrases. For a discussion of Roosevelt's speeches, see James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion And The Fox 1882-1940 (Harvest; New York, 1956).
78. See Barton J. Bernstein 'The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements Of Liberal Reform', op cit., p.264. Bernstein resolutely opposes this view: 'The New Deal failed to raise the impoverished, it failed to redistribute income, it failed to extend quality and generally countenanced racial discrimination and segregation. It failed generally to make business more responsible to the social welfare or to threaten big business' pre-eminent political power. In this sense, the New Deal, despite the shifts in tone and spirit from the earlier decade, was profoundly conservative, and continuous with the 1920s', p,264-5.
79. Relevant here is what Poulantzas called 'the isolation effect', in Political Power And Social Classes, p.130. Poulantzas' term is used to indicate the role of the State in 'disorganising' the political unity of the working class through the representation of subjects as 'individuals' or 'citizens', whose subjectivity is determined and defined precisely in relation to the State's construction of the juridico-political. As has been seen, however, the over-determining subject-position of 'citizen' or 'people' in New Deal discourse did not negate other positions: in fact its actual achievement lay in its ability precisely to articulate sex, race and class positions to its hegemonic discourse centred on 'the people'. This was the expansive operation of what has been called an hegemonic discourse of equivalent subject-positions constructed around terms of non-antagonistic difference. The success of this strategy was demonstrated throughout the 1930s by the tiny electoral support for the Communists and Socialists in

80. 'A WPA Art Project Brings Water To The Desert', by Charlotte H. Upton, Spokane Junior League, no date. HC/1107/AAA. The WPA's later plans for turning the Community Art Centres into units of local government and regulators for the provision of 'integrated public services' will be discussed in Chapter 6.
81. 'Exhibitions By Children', Federal Art Gallery, December 22nd - January 10th 1939. HC/1107/AAA.
82. *ibid.* In a report on a conference of Community Art Centres, held in August 1938, in Chicago, Cahill said: 'In my work for the Newark Museum, some ten years ago, I had felt greatly interested in the ideas of the director, John Cotton Dana, who believed that museum services should be as readily available and as indispensable to the community as those of the public library' FAP/DC53/AAA.
83. See Laclau's essay 'Towards A Theory Of Populism' in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, for an extended discussion of 'populist discourse'.
84. For an explanation of the concept of 'the suture', derived from psychoanalysis, see Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, Chapter 2, note 1. The following Chapter sets out Laclau and Mouffe's argument that the closure which the 'suture' implies can never be final and is constantly in need of renegotiation. 'If we accept...that a discursive totality never exists in the form of a simply given and delimited positivity, the relational logic will be incomplete and pierced by contingency' (p.110). Further, 'the practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meanings, and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity', p.113. Also see the Introduction to this thesis 'The Federal Art Project And "The Social"'.
85. 'A WPA Art Project Brings Water To The Desert'.
86. 'Design For A Democracy: The People's Art Center In St. Louis', no author, possibly written in 1946. HC/1107/AAA. It continues '...within the doors of the center color is not pigmentation which makes a man unfit to eat at our lunch counters; it is something which makes interesting models, thoughtful teachers, selfless boardmembers, and happy, vigorous pupils...'
87. *ibid.*
88. 'Concerning The Development Of Community Art Centers'. It continues 'The WPA/FAP has based its work upon the belief that in a democracy all artists should have an opportunity to work and do their best and that the ultimate judgement as to permanent values must be left to posterity'.
89. 'The Artist Teaches...'

90. Progress Report, Federal Art Project, November 1937.- April 1938. It continues 'the draining off of America's best talent from the native soil of the small town to the strange pavements of the big city - a process that has been going on for generations - has inundated sections of America and left others high and dry as potential cultural wastelands. It seems essential for the best interests of American culture that this process be reversed'.
91. See Patrick White, op cit..
92. Federal Art Project statement, no title, no author. NDA/AAA.
93. Speech by Cahill, no title, January 11th 1941. The danger of the absence of talk in a democracy is directly linked to industrialisation, mass production and mechanisation: 'the radio, the movies, and the sunday supplement seem to determine our standards and control our lives. The creative instinct is lost in the world of machines and the creative expression of yesterday is often hidden behind museum doors. In every art the need is for demonstration to ordinary people that they themselves can participate, that the road to appreciation is to do, not only to watch. Whenever art becomes more than a spectator activity, the quality of cultural life is immeasurably improved'. HC/1106/AAA.
94. ibid.. Such a 'new' nation, ofcourse, was always grounded on precedent. In a statement entitled 'The WPA Art Program: A Summary', dated October 1st 1940, we hear 'the basic conception of both the WPA Art Program and the Community Art Centers are not new to American life. They are irrevocably linked with our national philosophy and with the hopes and dreams of those who settled this country. However, due to rapid industrial development and the falsification of values which have resulted from the machine age, the majority of people have forgotten that art is an experience that all may have and all may understand.' HC/1106/AAA.

CHAPTER 4

'Technologies Of The Soul': Federal Art In Institutions

The Community Art Centre programme of the Federal Art Project constituted one modality of the State's intervention into the social and cultural economy of America in the middle and late 1930s. It consisted, as was seen, of an ensemble of strategic practices, discourses and subject interpellations articulated around and unified through the construction of the subject-position 'citizen' and a vast array of equivalent interpellations (artist/worker/black/woman/family member, etc). This logic of equivalent terms, over-determined by the popular subject, constituted the hegemonic discourse of the Federal Art Project and beyond that, of a broad set of New Deal discourses ¹. This chapter will address the conjunctural insertion of Federal Art Project practices and cultural discourses into other existing State agencies, institutions and interpellative arenas, both those constructed contemporaneously as part of the New Deal, and those such as schools, hospitals and prisons, which had functioned as disciplinary sites and signs of State power and sovereignty prior to the massive increase in the size and activity of the State under Roosevelt's burgeoning federalism.

More than being concerned with the simple 'insertion' of Federal Art Project discourses, we shall consider the differential functioning of these discourses in terms of their intersection with other State and non-state discourses in particular institutional sites and stages in the disciplinary functions of State power ². Such conjunctures of

site, practice and discourse - psychiatric 'therapies', penal 'treatments' and educational 'programmes' ³ - and their precise relation to Federal Art Project discourses on the 'National-Popular', the 'national-cultural' and more specific anti-modernist, anti-European subject interpellations, must be understood in terms of what Foucault called 'the micro-physics of power' ⁴ . The resulting discursive relations between logics of equivalence and antagonism ⁵ produces a new set of 'dispositions', 'tactics', 'manoeuvres' and 'techniques' of interpellation and coercion ⁶ . Discipline and subject-organisation also presumes an epistemological object: 'a new knowledge of man/woman', and this too should be related to the terrains of knowledge constructed by the Federal Art Project in its reconstitution of a Past, a Tradition, the order of the Socio-Cultural and the new subject bearers of these epistemological structures.

STATE HOUSING POLICY AND FEDERAL ART PROJECT DISCOURSE

One such site for the investment of a multitude of State-directed interpellations, including the prime interpellation of the subject as 'subject-to-the-State' was that of the construction of Public Housing Projects by the Roosevelt Administration. While the New York City Housing Authority had been established in February 1934 and had attempted to transplant 19,000 families 'from the squalor of the slums' ⁷ , it was not until 1937 that the Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill was submitted to Congress with the aim of creating a national Housing Authority on a

basis similar to the system operating in Great Britain ⁸ . Its interpellative function of assisting in the construction of 'national unity' by absorbing the 'disaffected' and 'disarticulated' people in the 'lowest income groups' was made clear in Roosevelt's famous 'One Third Of A Nation' speech given in 1937 ⁹ . How could 'national unity' be possible when 'one third of a nation' was 'illclad, ill-nourished, illhoused' ¹⁰ ? This speech, along with that concerned with 'the Forgotten Man', exemplifies Roosevelt's populist interpellation and its central role in his political discourse ¹¹ . The State's demand for loyalty from its citizens and its monopoly of power and authority, in liberal-democratic theory, rested on the State's capacity to provide its subjects with adequate protection and accountability ¹² . Roosevelt's New Deal was thus responsible for the extension of liberal-democratic theory to include the State's role of providing some welfare - the 'social-wage' - for its citizens, in return for their acceptance of the legitimacy of State power. Within these provisions, housing was intended to both materially and discursively incorporate and articulate the 'excluded third' ¹³ . Their living conditions in the slums constituted a dangerous poverty, which bred 'popular-illegalities' and political sedition. State housing was to reform the slum-subject and produce a regularized, differentiated and epistemologically-visible subject of the State ¹⁴ .

The collaboration of the Federal Art Project with both national and state housing projects centred around a unity of interpellative strategies: both the Federal

Art Project and the United States Housing Authority were concerned to reconstitute American subjects as citizens. Both the Federal Art Project (as was seen in the previous chapter) and the housing authorities offered:

'a measure of assurance that once maladjusted and delinquent children and those whom art has aided to change from incipient enemies of society will become useful citizens, contributing to the general welfare of the country' 15

According to one author, numbers of contemporary artists were inspired by the Government's efforts to eliminate the slums ¹⁶. Regenerating the 'body of America' entailed both the construction of an expansive political and cultural hegemony across class, sexual, ethnic and religious interpellations but also a reconstitution of 'punctual' subjects: family-units and localised communities of interest and activity. 'We must preserve', Roosevelt said:

'not only the bodies of the unemployed from destruction but also their self-respect, their self-reliance and courage and determination' 17

Within this reproduction of 'the self', which we shall see emerge as a dominant motif across a range of penal, pedagogic and psychoanalytic discourses, art was granted a peculiar unifying capacity. This was based on both its 'collective practice' within the divisions of the Federal Art Project and also on its representations of a future state of social and political cohesion ¹⁸. Jane Addams's Hull House, in Chicago, was founded to mitigate the dangerous effect of slum life and deprivation on Chicago's immigrant working classes. As was stated in the previous

chapter, the concept of 'deprivation' already presumes a knowledge of the subject's legitimate wants and requirements, which are both socio-economic and now also cultural in their character. Within such institutions in this State strategy of containment and reconstitution:

'art became a powerful ally. The philosophy of Ruskin and Morris, which buttressed the thinking of American Progressives, used art as a practical tool for reshaping industrial capitalism and righting the social wrong it bred' 19

Within State housing projects the Federal Art Project functioned as a set of interpellative strategies, operating to assist in the reordering and retraining of the slum-subject as citizen. The artists and art of the Federal Art Project constituted a 'micro-power', a technique of instruction within State housing. Federal artists, as de facto agents of the State, both viewed the urban poor in their regimented redistribution and simultaneously, through their art, provided the poor with their vision of the State and society. Both modalities of the function of the Federal Art Project operated as 'factors of cohesion', both representing the State and representing the State's conception of the people's relations to their conditions of existence ²⁰ .

One such representation was that concerned with the sheer visibility of signs of the ordering State: Federal Art Project murals and sculptures in housing estates signified first and last the very intervention of the Federal State itself into the lives of the people. Constructed as the 'collective will of the nation', or more precisely as the equivalence between the 'collective will

of the nation' and the 'New Deal Administration', Federal Art Project art works represented the dispersal and saturation of the power of the State throughout America, 'down into the playgrounds and laundries of its subjects' ²¹ . Such a general materialisation of the power of the State - entailing 'regularity-in-dispersion' as the articulating unity of its discursive formation - appeared in particular form in Federal Art Project discourse ²² . While its diverse projects, practices and sites of activity articulated a unity based on the discourse of 'People' and 'Past', the Federal Art Project itself was also concerned to represent itself as a structural moment within the Works Progress Administration and the New Deal Administration in general ²³ .

When Harry Hopkins, director of the Works Progress Administration was asked to speak to the United Neighbourhood Houses Luncheon, in March 1936, the event was regarded as a coup by the publicity department of the Federal Art Project. The United Neighbourhood Houses organisation was the league of settlement and social work agencies in New York City, which had previously organised exhibitions of children's art, ninety percent of which had been produced on the Federal Art Project. Alex Williams, head of the Federal Art Project's national publicity office, wrote to Holger Cahill:

'This seems to me to be an extraordinary good chance to put into effect the new policy of publicity...The attention of the public will be focussed upon this meeting due to Mr. Hopkins' presence and it seems to me a fitting time to emphasise the scope of the Federal Art Project, in which so much of the work is so closely allied and identified with social and educational enterprise' 24

At the luncheon, Williams' organised a twelve-page pamphlet to be distributed to all guests explaining the settlement house art educational work:

'The whole pamphlet will be in effect an endorsement of the value of the WPA and will contain a list of the New York settlements and neighbourhood houses which now have WPA art instructors assigned'

25

Six public housing projects were built in New York State—five in New York City and one in Buffalo — which received Federal Art Project art works. These new 'airy modern apartments' were designed with a low rent in mind and were to provide community rooms and walled playgrounds and courtyards, in which were placed outdoor sculpture created by artists employed on the Federal Art Project's fine arts division.

The Queensbridge Houses project, built by the New York City Housing Authority in the late 1930s, received a cast-stone relief by Federal artist Cesare Stea entitled Community Life or Family Life And Recreation (illus.1), which was placed on the rear wall of the housing project's community building. Twelve stone animals were placed at the entrance to the housing complex, constructed by the federal artists William Hirsch, F.A. Williams, Bernard Walsh, Adolf Wolff (illus.2) and Muriel Brennecke (illus.3). Fourteen decorative plaques were built into the wall of the nursery school. However, it is Philip Guston's mural in the lobby of the community centre entitled Work And Play (illus.4) ²⁶, which is the most sophisticated narration of the discourses informing State housing policy and federal art cultural-policy alike ²⁷. The logic of

equivalent subject-positions in this representation consists of the 'family-member' interpellation ('father'/'mother'/'child') which is central to the discourses around State housing policy and the 'popular' or 'citizen' interpellation key to Federal Art Project discourses. Within the intersection of these two sets of discourse, these two subject-positions can be said to be over-determining. Other interpellations occur, of course, but the terms 'family-member' and 'citizen' constitute the articulatory principles of the composite discourse ²⁸ .

In a commemorative statement produced by the Federal Art Project, introducing the federal art works of Philip Guston, we hear a paradigmatic account of these equiv-
 alential terms produced by the collision of State housing and Federal Art Project discourses in their co-interpell-
 ation of the subject. Queensbridge Houses is a 'model city for 3,149 families' ²⁹ . It integrates a community centre, a children's centre, stores, playgrounds, spacious interior courts and garden walks, and a fifteen acre park ³⁰ .

Guston's Work And Play, the statement says, functions to narrate the 'story' of Queensbridge and the artist's task was to tell 'of the life that goes on there' ³¹ . Work And Play has, as its central theme, the family group: 'symbolic of the basis on which any community must build' ³² . This articulating principle ³³ is then ordered in relation to the other dependent subject-positions which 'integrate the lives of the residents' ³⁴ . The symbolic family 'anchors' a side panel representing 'a group of young children playing near slum buildings in the process of demolition' ³⁵ .

Children - as 'young realists' and the 'citizens' of the

future - then displace into 'the workman in the foreground...representative of building and construction' ³⁶ . This workman is in turn displaced by the 'three basketball players' over the left doorway of the lobby, who represent 'one phase of community recreation', while 'a related trio of musicians and dancers' are shown above the right doorway ³⁷ . Such displacement and simultaneous integration (or condensation) of subject-positions signifies the reordered and reunified interpellative function of State discourse, constituting in itself a 'regularity in dispersion' articulating 'woman'/'man' as also 'mother'/'father' with 'worker'/'citizen', in a chain of non-antagonistic differential equivalences articulating recreation, reproduction, labour and learning:

'The figure of the doctor and child at the right of this scene indicates the importance of public health, and at the far right are shown a group of youngsters engaged in various activities typical of community life - painting, reading, building model aeroplanes and learning carpentry' ³⁸

The Federal Art Project mural functioned, therefore, as an integrated element within a network of operational strategies mobilised in the regulation and distribution of the subject-citizen in State housing policy. Within this mechanism, we hear that the housing projects' community centres operated under a method designed by the Housing Authority to provide 'wellrounded' educational and recreational programmes for all members of the family ³⁹ . It is within this integrated mechanism of control that the art works were situated and their inter-

pellative functions made obvious in Federal Art Project statements:

'These art works belong to the community. They are a bequest to the future, a vital integrated expression of today, giving a permanence to our times' 40

Federal Art Project murals such as Guston's Work And Play are, in the context of State housing policy and its attendant discourses, both statements and notification ⁴¹ ; they interpellative and suture as both suggestion and demand.

As in the case of the provision of Community Art Centres, regarded as essential for 'communities' disaffected by the conditions of the Depression, so were regarded the new 'hygienic' housing projects planned for New York's blackppopulation in Harlem. The Harlem River Houses project had begun in 1936 under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration and was later handed over to the New York City Housing Authority. Its buildings contained works by Federal Art Project sculptors Heinz Warneke, Richmond Barthé, Rudolph Henn, Erwin Springweiller and Theodore Cotillon-Barbarossa. Heinz Warneke and his assistants constructed two free-standing groups entitled Mother And Child and Young Man, erected in the courtyard of the housing project. Olin Dows, director of the Works Progress Administration-financed Treasury Relief Art Project, wrote in an article in the American Magazine Of Art:

'At one end of the yard on a brick pier which divides the main south entrance, kneels a dignified negro workman figure; similarly mounted at the north entrance a woman and child in pink cast stone face him...' 42

'Worker' and 'Family' subject-positions thus materially stand in social space, in a logic of equivalence, with their terms displacing one to the other, both 'nodal points' in the State's interpellative strategy constructing a binary relation of non-antagonistic difference. Such a plurality of simple differences constitutes the 'New Deal Social' as a full positivity: 'black'/'worker'/'woman'/'mother'/'citizen'. For Dows, Harlem River Houses 'large-windowed brick apartment buildings, surrounding airy courtyards' represented a cleansing regulation of a potentially antagonistic urban racial grouping ⁴³. The making of their 'visibility' to the State, and the Federal Art which made 'the world' visible to the inhabitants, constituted also the federal artist as him/herself 'worker' and 'subject-of-the-State'. Within the projects, federal art became a new 'provision' for the housing clients. It:

'helped make art...a spiritual commodity
more easily and more intimately available ⁴⁴
to greater numbers'

Art functioned doubly as a 'cohesive factor': it signified the presence and power of the State in discipline and beneficence, regulating recreation and movement and also produced the 'artist' as 'citizen' ⁴⁵. According to Dows, federal art was mainly produced:

'by our younger citizens, a few of whom are
foreign born. Its contribution to America in
its art is definitely important...new blood
has stimulated healthy innovation and ex- ⁴⁶
periments in expression'

Federal art, as will be seen, in its intersection with other State practices and-discourses, became inextricably

involved with both disciplinary mechanisms and didactic operations ⁴⁷ .

Redhook Housing Project in Brooklyn was the site of Marion Greenwood's Federal Art Project mural Blueprint For Living (illus.5), painted in 1939-40, which consisted of three panels on three walls of the entrance hall to the housing centre auditorium ⁴⁸ . The right-hand panel showed labourers at work on a housing project while a small family group stood by and watched its new home being built. The left panel showed a group of youths studying, playing ball and, 'in general, profitting from clean living' ⁴⁹ . The third panel, a thin strip over the door presented an image of the future planned for the youth of America and included a man with blueprints and one with some sort of machine, while others stood by and looked hopefully into the distance ⁵⁰ .

Again, the chains of equivalent subject-positions are clearly articulated, this time also in relation to a linking of temporal positions, with the Present (New Deal) constructing both the sense of the evils of the Past and the promise of a planned and integrated Future. The State is positioned as the beneficent arbiter of the lives of the People, empowered to reconcile 'the various needs of the individual' with 'accepted social needs' ⁵¹ . The State's task is to harness economic production to social ends and thereby abolish the anarchy of the market and replace it with a State-defined moral-economy of need and 'rightful desires'. Again, within this vision of the re-ordered Social, recreation is stressed along with:

'the development of aesthetic appreciation

through cultural activities that come out
of the new leisure produced by a higher
social order' 52

In this sense, Redhook and the other model housing projects can be seen as material encapsulations of the New Deal's vision of the future American society. Like federal art, they functioned as signs of the State's fidelity to the concept of a planned, ordered and regulated nation. In the pursuit of an economically and socio-culturally homogenous whole, disparate and different elements would fuse as non-antagonistic moments within a system designed to prevent the possibility of the cataclysmic events of 1929-1932 and its atomising consequences for American society ⁵³.

STATE PEDAGOGY AND FEDERAL ART PROJECT DISCOURSE

If the discursive intertextuality brought about by the collaboration and collision of Federal Art Project cultural discourse and State Housing Authority socio-economic concerns consisted in the prime logic of equivalence being constructed around the binary relation 'citizen' and 'family-member', then in the application of federal art in the country's schools, the dominant displacement was that of 'citizen' and 'worker-to-be'. The construction of a universal logic of equivalence across all non-antagonistic subject-positions and their interpellative sites was the goal of the New Deal's strategic discourse ⁵⁴. In schools, the function of federal art, according to one author, was to educate and enlighten those who would be 'future citizens of the republic' ⁵⁵. It was added, though, students could be

taught 'the meaning of art' ⁵⁶ . As we have seen, the 'meaning of art' was constructed across a chain of equivalences itself, displacing into signs of the State, or indexes of 'democracy-in-action' or as condensing 'national unity' through its demands of collaboration by federal artists in the very making of art and in the representation of social collectivity which the art produced. Ruth Reeves mural Student Activities In Schools (illus.6), at the Andrew Jackson High School in Queens, was thus intended as 'an inspiration for the clean cut American way of life' ⁵⁷ . Lucienne Bloch's Music Mural (illus.7) at George Washington High School in the Bronx had to function explicitly as a pedagogic tool:

'In addition to illustrating the music instruments of various cultures, it presents a picture of music as a common unifying bond between the people of those cultures' 58

Art thus functioned as both material index of a collaborative exercise in that it produced 'artist' as 'citizen'/'worker' in a relation of non-antagonistic difference and also constructed representations for other subjects (the 'clients') of their own interpellative space in the 'national-cultural' unity ⁵⁹ .

The specificity of this socio-pedagogic function of federal art in schools was organised in terms of a calibration of representation to the particular function of the school in the reproduction of the social division of labour. Pedagogic murals had their modalities of operation defined by the tripartite division of American schools into 'technical', 'academic' and 'science'

specialisms. Federal art in schools thus aided in reproducing the social and intellectual division of labour centred around vocational and non-vocational training. 'Technical' schools received murals devoted to representations of technological development and specific industrial development, while 'academic' schools were concerned with 'histories of civilisation' and 'Man's cultural advancement'. Examples of the former included Eric Mose's mural Power (illus.8) at the Samuel Gompers High School in the Bronx which specialised in electrical engineering, or Paul Lawler and Geoffrey Norman's The History Of The Textile Industry (illus.9) at the Textile High School in New York City. At the elite science academy of Brooklyn Technical High School, Maxwell B. Starr erected the mural Histories Of World Renowned Scientists. The head of the Science Department at the Syracuse Board Of Education gave an indication of the sort of mural he regarded as valuable to a 'science' school:

'The painting I have in mind shows in the foreground a boy whose face and attitude shows great curiosity and interest. He is not a dreamer. He is looking perhaps through a microscope or at a piece of apparatus held in his hand or at a piece of machinery. This is the experiment. In the background of the picture, is shown the boy as a man, the doctor or the inventor or the capitalist looking at his life's work which he has created: for example, a hospital, a piece of machinery, or a manufacturing plant, etc' 60

Again, the logics of equivalence are activated, this time articulating not only subject-positions - with 'the boy who is not a dreamer' equivalent to the child as 'a realist' - but also the products of workers, achieving a

unity of purpose and positivity equal to that of the interpellated subjects who were responsible for them ⁶¹. Even the 'capitalist' subject-position, stripped of its antagonistic resonances through the ethical interventions of the State in redistributing and restraining monopoly capitalist power, becomes a vehicle for the displacement of equivalences between positive terms: he, too, does his part ⁶².

Grover Cleveland High School was the site for the installation of Job Goodman's mural entitled The Spirit Of Modern Civilisation, which included a panel called The Thrills Of Learning. This mural, according to its artist, was concerned with the capacity of students to tackle and solve the problems of life:

'He thrills as he learns and with undomitable will and urge bursts the limitations of his actual state and taps a range of unlimited energy and of inventive and creative possibilities' 63

This description could serve as an adequate instantiation of the reformed subject-position 'artist' in Federal Art Project discourse. It condenses 'worker-to-be' with 'citizen' and 'student', fusing the traditional 'energy', 'inventiveness' and 'creativity' of the artist interpellation with that of the tangible social and economic orientation of the 'student' as future 'worker'. The federal artist in school is thus as much the subject to be transformed by the State as the 'client' for whom the federal artist works.

The construction of equivalences between different subject-positions in order to articulate the positivity of the Social within an hegemonic formation such as that of the New Deal also involved extending atleast the promise of the Social and the National to the 'anti-social' and the 'excluded'. If urban slum poor represented one object of such an incorporating operation, then the social articulation of the prison population represented another target. Although Ben Shahn and Lou Bloch's murals, planned for Riker's Island Penitentiary, were rejected by the prison authorities because of what was called their 'psychological unfitness', their murals and those of Alexander Alland, Harold Lehman and Anton Refregier can be seen as paradigms of 'interpellation-into-the-National' ⁶⁴. Although commissioned not by the Federal Art Project proper, but by the local precedent in New York City - the Emergency Relief Board - they exhibit elements of the Federal Art Project's cultural discourse and also present an interesting case of the meeting point between so-called 'progressive thought' and 'reactionary values' in New Deal discourse. As will be seen later in relation to psychiatric discourse in America in the late 1930s, this meeting point was constituted around the construction of a new epistemological object, a knowledge-practice operative in a network of institutional sites. This was based on the formation of individuality no longer by 'historico-ritual mechanisms' but now rather by 'scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms' ⁶⁵. It is within this new regulative regime

that federal art functioned to provide representations of the Social and the Nation, to which penal 'treatment' and disciplinary practices were concerned to reconcile the prison inmates.

Alexander Alland's photomural Approach To Manhattan (illus.10) was thus designed to re-establish in the prisoners' minds the 'legitimate' desires and the 'values of a wholesome life' ⁶⁶. Harold Lehman's mess hall mural Man's Daily Bred represented cultivation: of Nature and Man and of the need to cultivate Man as Worker. The centre panel represented the articulatory principle of the mural: the Family. 'For it is the family which provides the impulse for most of man's activities and it is the family which is the basis of most human relationships' ⁶⁷. The re-entry of the prison subject into the Social must therefore take place via the interpellation of 'family', as the cornerstone of all community activity: from the actual 'family' of 'Father/Mother/Child' to the Nation-as-Family, with the State as rightful authority and with due responsibilities for its subjects. Anton Refregier's mural in the prison waiting room entitled Home And The Family (illus.11) was the summation of the ten murals planned for the institution: it contrasted an idyllic rural community with an urban industrial society in which the children either spent their time working with their parents or left unguarded and open to all the evils of urban life ⁶⁸. Its culminating panel showed the synthesis of the most valuable aspects from both types of social organisation and the rejection of the worst: a society with the organic social relations of a *gemeinschaft* combined with

the advantage of present day technology and cultural developments. As such it presented a fantasy of the social and cultural reconciliation between antagonistic subjects and forces, based on the unproblematic extension and utility of the technology created by that industrial and urban capitalist order ⁶⁹ .

Lucienne Bloch's mural at the Womens' House Of Detention in New York City, entitled Childhood (illus.12), part of an unfinished series to have been called Cycle Of A Woman's Life, was also concerned with representing to prisoners the possibility of a unified and non-antagonistic 'community of interests' beyond the walls of the prison. The scene shows mixed ethnic children playing together while to the right of the mural more children are being led to school by a healthy strong young white woman who represented the teacher and guardian. Again, the specificity of the Federal Art Project discourse and the penal discourse to which it was articulated consisted of the two subject-positions 'citizen' and 'woman-offender', with the projected displacement of the latter into the former. An array of secondary displacements included 'student' (learning the Social), 'worker' (learning to labour) and the perennial 'family-member' interpellation which worked to naturalise order and power. 'Children' signified the inmates themselves and the teacher the personified State. According to New York Commissioner Of Correction Austin MacCormack, art in penal institutions was valuable as colour and decoration were 'an aid to the rehabilitation of women offenders' ⁷⁰ . Only one of Bloch's planned three murals was completed 'due largely to the

problem of protecting the fresco surface from the inevitable rough treatment to which it would be subject in a recreation room' ⁷¹ . While the mural projected the potential interpellation of the offender as 'Mother' or 'Worker-to-be' (notice the factory in the distance), the plurality of equivalent subject-positions available to the prisoners in the representation was not great. Rather, they were conceived by Bloch and agreed by the authorities to be 'within the expectationsoof Bloch's audience, should they respond favourablyto rehabilitation. They were not to be urged to reach for the stars' ⁷² . Rather than being primarily concerned with the offering of the possibility of 'self-improvement' to the offender in terms of their own social mobility, the mural was an exercise in representing 'civilisation' and 'order' to the inmates as their most important lesson in their return to the Social. Indeed, we are told, art as an activity itself and in its representational possibilities, could demonstrate 'that the creative process could be a relevant and enriching experience to even the most untutored among them' ⁷³ . The visibility of 'the artist', at work in the prison community, representing to the inmates their return to the National community, also involved the equivalence 'artist'/'worker'/'citizen'. In fact, for the prisoners and warders alike:

'outside ofmthe facttthat their conception of an artist was shattered when they saw me work without a smock and without inspired fits, they were delighted to witness the creation of a genuine hand-painted picture'

74

The activity of artists—employed by the federal government

to paint murals in such sites as the Women's House Of Detention was as much concerned with 'civilising' the artist (his/her return to the Social and the duties of citizenship) as with the return of the anti-social offender to the National Community.

BODY/CULTURE/NATIONAL REPARATIONS

The intersection of federal art and its discourses with that of the hospital and medical practices was centred around the subject-positions 'citizen' and 'patient', and, as with the prison, the displacement from the latter to the former. This was as true of the 'mental patient' as that of the 'physically ill' patient. The integration of the 'citizen' and 'patient' positions also involved the planned integration of the hospital environment itself as an homogenous space for the reconstitution of the 'patient' as 'citizen' and his/her return to the Social and 'the world of work'. According to a report by Audrey McMahon, director of the Federal Art Project in New York City, written in 1939:

'carefully selected works have been made more readily available to tuberculosis patients, whose long period of illness may be made more bearable by living in close contact with paintings or prints' 75

While the abstract painter Ilya Bolotowsky believed 'realistic' paintings to be inappropriate for patients who would have to be confined indefinitely and he therefore designed and painted an abstract mural for a hospital for the chronically ill, there was no strict definition of the

type of murals suited especially to a hospital environment⁷⁶.
Indeed, some, such as William Palmer's History Of
Medicine in the incoming and outgoing rooms at Queens
General Hospital was both rigorously 'realist' and didactic.
Marcus Kogel, Medical Superintendant at the hospital wrote
an eleven page introduction for the mural's unveiling
ceremony called 'Medicine Through The Ages', which extolled:

'the triumph of rational medicine over faith -
the victory of science over superstition... 77
the golden age of medicine'

Such 'progress' and 'rationalism' also stood as discursive
relays for the advances and transformations of the New
Deal itself, which, through the power and moral authority
of the federal State would rationalise the anarchy of
capital-labour struggles and through such projects as the
Tennessee Valley Authority produce material instantiations
of the rationally integrated and planned society of the
future in America⁷⁸.

In hospitals in the 1930s, co-ordinated decorative
schemes were seen as part of the method of reconstructing
the therapeutic site as a 'scientifically-planned unit'
and murals produced by the Federal Art Project would
operate to enhance the recuperative treatments of
patients⁷⁹. Art, once again, was seen to have a precise
utility, while artists as responsible citizens functioned
in effective social and professional roles in the provision
of services and the meeting of patient's needs.

Art was enlisted by the State to assist in the re-
organisation of the bodies of its subjects and their
preparation for return to the Social and the duties of

citizenship and the discipline of work. 'In our city's hospitals', Audrey McMahon says:

'bedridden patients, convalescents and those undergoing mental therapy are provided with the stimulation, courage and hope that colorful, purposively designed murals can give' 80

Although no rigorous formalisation of appropriate murals for particular patients was produced by the Federal Art Project administration (as had happened with school murals), children's wards were regarded as not the place for representations of subjects of daily life as they were 'liable to cause nostalgia' ⁸¹. Rather, murals in these wards should allow children to 'escape from their surroundings into a much more pleasant world of imaginative fancy' ⁸². This was not the case with adult patients. With Helen West Heller's proposed mural series called Johnny Appleseed at the Hospital For Chronic Diseases on Welfare Island, the represented scenes were to remind patients of the places they had lived and to 'stimulate them to read about American history' ⁸³. Adult patients were regarded as conveniently situated to reflect on the history of their nation during their temporary secondment from work due to illness. This didactic function of the federal artist within therapeutic treatment also motivated Charles Davis' mural at The Staten Island Farm Colony, a convalescent home for old people. His series of murals called American Industry Between 1875 And 1905 (illus.13) were intended to suggest to patients 'a feeling of joy in achievement and satisfaction at having taken part in the progress of American industry' ⁸⁴. The occupational therapy room at Bellevue-Hospital, the site most populated

by federal art hospital murals, contained Philip Reisman's Interdependence Of Industry And Agriculture . This showed to patients who were practicing work skills the world's productive forces, 'working in harmony and on a big plane, inspite of the various handicaps that a social form of production has under the present social system' ⁸⁵ . This statement by the artist again demonstrates an issue which we shall address later: that large numbers of artists who regarded themselves as politically radical, with socialist and communist beliefs, were put to work by the Federal Art Project in various institutional sites. This is why the intersection of Federal Art Project discourses with other penal, pedagogic and psychoanalytic discourses has been characterised as one of collision~~ion~~ as well as collaboration. While the New Deal's intervention into sections of monopoly capital power and into labour organisations through the Congress Of Industrial Organisations ⁸⁶ could absorb a great deal of radical political discourse into its own hegemonic articulation, the occasional antagonism between administration and artist could result in the possible 'disarticulation' of sections of 'the people' ⁸⁷ . Such an antagonism could develop over an artist's too fundamental critique of capitalism, as is the case here and which occurred on numerous occasions ⁸⁸ . An ethnic antagonism occurred over a proposed mural for Harlem Hospital which at the time served a 96% black clientele. Vertis Hayes painted a mural entitled The Pursuit Of Happiness (illus.14) for the main corridor of the hospital's residence for nurses. Its depiction of the activities of

black people in America and Africa was challenged by the hospital's white administration as 'giving undue emphasis to policies of segregation', to which the administration was opposed ⁸⁹. The New York Artists' Union wrote to Cahill in January 1936:

'The Superintendant of the hospital goes further than this...in his feeling as to how the hospital should be decorated - that is to say, with murals depicting the activities of white people' 90

Normally, such a challenge to a Federal Art Project mural would not have occurred in public as the rigorous procedures for the commission of federal art for institutions would have provided a period for the official vetting of the proposed representation and the right of the administration of the institution to require the artist to make changes thought appropriate for the institutional setting of the mural. In this case, the Commissioner Of Hospitals had been abroad when the project had been proposed and had not known of the details of the subject of the mural ⁹¹. Eventually this case was reviewed and with the support of the Artists' Union, the Federal Art Project Supervisers Association in New York, and Holger Cahill and Audrey McMahon, the mural was successfully defended and saved from destruction. This was not always the case ⁹².

DISTRACTION/ABSTRACTION: MODERNISM AND PSYCHOANALYTIC DISCOURSE

The installation of federal art in psychiatric hospitals and its heavily theorised role in the treatment

of neurotic and schizophrenic patients presents the most cogent example of the condensation of contemporary discourses on art, citizenship (with its equivalent subject-positions 'worker' and 'family-member') and American culture within the Federal Art Project's fine art programme. More than this, it addressed more immediately than in other institutional sites the question of the extent to which aesthetic modernism in America could be conceived as a force for social good or evil. In opposition to a generally negative construction of modernist aesthetic theories within Federal Art Project discourses, the intersection of subh discourses with those of psychoanalytic and therapeutic themes articulated a positive function. This was because it conceived of 'abstraction' not as a philosophical or aesthetic problem, but as one pertaining to the relation of the individual - and also crucially that of the artist - to both the State and social order. It also gave a pragmatic definition of the importance of 'the real' and one's 'adjustment to reality'. While Walter Quirt's murals in the psychiatric lecture room at Bellevue Hospital, depicting The Growth Of Medicine From Primitive Times (illus.15) were an historico-didactic representation of earlier and later methods of treatment with the 'final summation of present day science and the future with its benefits to man' ⁹³, the most significant federal art discourse dealt with the intervention of art into the individual's psyche and its role in orientating the individual to National and State-subjectivity ⁹⁴. In 1938 an exhibition entitled 'Art And Psychology' was held at Harlem Community-Art Centre under the joint

auspices of the psychiatric division of Bellevue Hospital and the Federal Art Project. The exhibition contained, said Alex R. Stavenitz, the director of the Federal Art Project teaching programme, 'certain important implications in the world of psychotherapy and art [and would] discuss the scientific and aesthetic aspects of this material'⁹⁵. Dr. Marcus Kogel, Medical Superintendent of Queens General Hospital testified to the 'definite' place of form and colour in paintings in the treatment of mental cases⁹⁶.

Ester Levine and Leonard Garfinkle were two federal artists commissioned to research the place of art in the treatment of psychiatric patients⁹⁷. In a paper entitled 'A Mural In A Mental Hospital Created With Therapeutic Considerations', Levine defined the artist's task as being to:

'transmute in a particular direction the emotions arising from primordial conflict and express them in a pure aesthetic form... I have created my mural in a semi-abstract way. "Psycho-plastic" mural would describe the interaction between tensions, created through planes, forms and colors used as an emotive factor, through the use of subjects as psychic symbols... Artistic creation, as testified by the art of primitives, children and psychotics, is a step toward the conquest of the personal world which has not been completed'

98

Abstraction in art, therefore, could be utilised by doctors (and standing behind them, the State) in order to suture the mental patient into both a coherent self and then into the Social: in fact the self would be constituted in the Social as the Social would penetrate the self. The neurotic would thus be recovered for the normal. Abstraction in art would return the patient to

the Real. This strategic utilisation of abstraction by the Federal Art Project in the context of institutional psychiatry constitutes abstraction in art as itself a moment of the Real and as such enables the structuring of a particular formulation of 'Modernist Theory' within the articulation of Federal Art Project discourse.

The decision by the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1927 to limit the practice of psychoanalysis to medical doctors prepared the way for its domestication by American psychiatry. Levine tells us that a most important function of art in a mental institution is to 'introduce the individual into the culture in which he is destined to live' ⁹⁹. Psychoanalysis is thus conscripted, along with abstract art into the operation of reshaping and training the aberrant individual into the ways of the world ¹⁰⁰.

Leonard Garfinkle's paper 'Some Psychological Aspects Of Mural Painting In A Mental Hospital', considered it necessary for the muralist to know something about psychiatry and psychoanalysis in order that his mural design could be 'part of psychiatric procedure' ¹⁰¹. As part of such a procedure:

'this type of mural can also act as a socialising force on the ward. It can crystallise the myths, legends and symbols of primitive peoples which are the product of dreams and imaginations centuries old and carried the course of years into the present day society' ¹⁰²

Abstract art was to aid in the production of the 'autonomous ego' and then reconcile the unified subject with the Social. Such a function of federal art, as with 'medicalised' American psychoanalysis, was to support, rather than sub-

vert the institutions of the society: art would operate itself as a factor of cohesion,,producing the individual as coherent subject and as integrated subject-to-the-State ¹⁰³.

A 'successful' case of art therapy was recorded by one Lillian Druckerman, a teacher at the Queensboro' Community Art Centre. 'Case History 3', 'William T', was transformed from being 'a problem child' to a 'developing whole' ¹⁰⁴. Druckerman's cure was simple: William could commit his murders ,shootings, warring and general destruction on paper. After two and a half months of this vicarious violence, we hear that:

'One day he began a new kind of painting -
barnyard scenes and yellow chicks, with
pink pigs, brown milking cows and mellow
sun' ¹⁰⁵

As far as Druckerman was concerned, 'William T' was tranquilised: no longer destructive or disruptive, but himself unified through the unifying capacity of art ¹⁰⁶.

The relationship between psychiatric and psycho-analytic discourses and treatments and penal theory and policing strategy is discussed in a long statement by Dr. Frank J. Curran of the Children's Ward of the Psychiatric Division of Bellevue Hospital, called 'Art And The Problem Child' ¹⁰⁷. This is an extensive encapsulation of the attempt by the Federal Art Project and medical institutions to construct the identity of the individual (as psyche, citizen and worker) and of the Social (as Law, Power and Moral Arbiter). The children in Dr. Curran's ward have 'every type of abnormality' ¹⁰⁸ and 'more or less severe behaviour problems' ¹⁰⁹. The children, referred by an array of

State institutions - various mental 'hygiene clinics' ¹¹⁰ , children's courts, social agencies and the public schools - have 'usual psychological problems' compounded with unfavourable social circumstances of 'the economically-depressed classes' ¹¹¹ . They suffer from schizophrenia and demoentia praecox:

'a common mental disease in adults but rare in children. The cause of this disease is still not known but it effects the brain so that the individual can not deal with reality in an integrated fashion but is constantly struggling with a tendency to revert back to primitive attitudes, magical thinking, hallucinatory experiences and infantile sexual satisfactions' 112

According to Curran, art has the function in psychotherapy of expressing 'fundamental human tendencies' ¹¹³ . Art can provoke the patient to organise at a higher level 'his own psychic energies' ¹¹⁴ . The patient, if allowed to paint and draw, will produce firstly simple forms 'identical to those of modern expressionism and cubism' ¹¹⁵ . In fact, Curran says:

'some of the pictures of mentally defective children have great similarity with the schematic forms of Mondrian. Other pictures remind us of the compositions of Kandinsky' 116

The forms a child uses, he says, and the 'part of reality with which he is preoccupied' in his art are a mirror of his psychic needs and problems ¹¹⁷ . A schizophrenic girl whose forms looked like 'the fantastic world of Tanguy' was, according to Curran, continually striving back to the more elaborate 'world of reality' ¹¹⁸ . Art thus definitely had a therapeutic value, although in this case, the child finally 'relapsed into a state of indifference and primitive

behaviour which necessitated her removal from normal children' ¹¹⁹ . Despite this particular case, Curran was convinced that art activity offered the child 'a new approach to reality' and he believed that the Federal Art Project had done 'great service' for children on the Observation ward at Bellevue Hospital and for psychiatry in general. Art, both 'abstract' and 'representational' when released from the grip of the modernist and academic artists alike, when made an activity for and accessible to 'all the people' and to the ill especially, could be a liberating force. It allowed:

'the release through expression of exuberant youthful energies into channels that are a healthy antidote to the disintegrating forces of our large industrial cities and to the mechanised artificial world of movies, radio, etc, now prevailing in almost all communities' ¹²⁰

Psychoanalysis was absorbed and modified by American doctors and intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s because, like the Federal Art Project, it could operate to mitigate the absence of a unified national culture ¹²¹ . But if the Federal Art Project attempted to constitute such a collective past and interpellate subjects into the social order being reconstituted by the New Deal, then in operation with psychoanalytic discourse it also played a part in providing a history for the individual. In fact, not only a Past but also a Future. The emphasis on art teaching for children, those both 'well' and 'sick', centred around their construction as 'the citizens of the future' ¹²² . Bedridden children whose frail bodies are imprisoned in plaster casts are given 'a new meaning for

existence' by being allowed to paint and draw ¹²³ . Art becomes both a therapy and a police tactic: it aids physical recovery and prevents physical violence. 'Our classes help in keeping the children off the streets and preventing juvenile delinquency', said Mary Hutchinson, a technical supervisor on the Federal Art Project prints and drawing division:

'In several centers we are working with the Crime Prevention Bureau. In the art classes, the aggressive child finds a safety valve for his pent-up emotions. The timid child who has withdrawn into a world of make-believe, can bring this world back to reality on paper' 124

Indeed, the capacity of the State, through such agencies as the Federal Art Project, to reconstitute a fragmenting social and cultural order and to reform the subjects of the nation through the construction of a set of equivalent subject-positions, articulating class, sex, race and religion into the 'National-Popular' was both ambitious and successful to a degree that was not true of the organised left in America ¹²⁵ . While the 1935 'Popular Front' strategy of the Communist Party was an attempt to construct a broad anti-fascist alliance which came too little and was too late, the New Deal State's hegemonizing forces could operate both the so-called 'isolation effect' which disarticulated class-based subject-positions as the articulatory principle of a political discourse and re-articulated a social positivity centred around the nodal points of 'citizenship', and the 'national-cultural' ¹²⁶ . As has been seen, this expansive hegemonic discourse could absorb even the subject-position 'capitalist' and 'unionized worker' ¹²⁷ .

Within this strategy, art, through its 'democratic' dispersal in the Social, its therapeutic application in institutions and its detachment from the modernist coterie and academic establishment would create for the future 'a genuine audience for American art'. This community of practitioners and consumers would have an appreciation of art based on far more than the 'passive visual perceptions' or 'instruction in history and aesthetics'; it would be based rather on art's practical capacity to unify both individual bodies and souls as well as the corpus constituting America as Nation ¹²⁸ .

Notes To Chapter 4

1. 'Discourse' in this sense is meant to refer to a wide range of phenomena, from Roosevelt's political speeches to such New Deal agencies and authorities as the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Rural Resettlement Administration. Following Laclau and Mouffe, this theory of discourse admits the existence of 'real objects' outside and independent of the mind of the observer, but considers the meaning of these objects to be a necessary articulation of discourse. This caveat is designed to supercede the familiar Marxist distinction/dualism between 'the discursive' (e.g. 'the ideological') and the 'extra-discursive' (e.g. 'the economic base'). See Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.108-110. However, the notion of 'the New Deal in general' should be recognised as problematic, as it refers to an apparent homogeneity of statements, practices and sites of antagonism without the admittance of conflict or contradiction, for example, within the State apparatuses. The existence and effects of such antagonisms should be both theoretically and empirically accepted.
2. As mentioned previously, the distinction between 'State' and 'non-state' is used while being mindful of Althusser's belief that the distinction itself is constructed by the State in its division of the 'public' and the 'private'. He says 'As a conscious Marxist, Gramsci already forestalled the objection. The distinction between the public and the private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law...What matters is how they function. Private institutions can perfectly well 'function' as Ideological State Apparatuses'. Lenin And Philosophy And Other Essays, pp.137-8.
3. This chapter draws on the work of Michel Foucault in Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison (Penguin; Aylesbury, 1977). Foucault's analysis of the transformations in the nature of the maintenance of social order and control in Western European societies revolves around the development of institutions involved with producing scientific knowledges of human bodies in order to influence action. He says that psychiatric therapies, penal treatments and educational programmes have an integrated function in modern societies: 'educational psychology is supposed to correct the rigours of the school, just as the medical or psychiatric interview is supposed to rectify the effects of the discipline of work', p.226.
4. *ibid.*, p.26. He continues 'Now the study of this micro-physics presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to appropriation' but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory. In short, this power is exercised rather than possessed;—it is not the privilege, ac-

- quired or preserved, of the dominant class, that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of 'those who are dominated', p.26.
5. We shall consider federal art in relation to three arenas of discourse: penal, pedagogic, and psycho-analytic. Within all three are constituted antagonistic subjects: 'the offender', 'the delinquent' and 'the mad'.
 6. In Laclau and Mouffe's terms, both 'interpellation' & 'coercion' would constitute moments in a discourse. They are not to be counterposed. Althusser says all apparatuses function within a displacement from interpellative to coercive mechanisms and vice versa.
 7. This was calculated as a total of 70,000 people. Quoted in Empire Magazine Sunday September 26th 1965 'Marion Greenwood And Her First New Mural At Syracuse University', no author. Seven of the New York City Housing Authority projects were located at First Houses, Harlem River, Williamsburg, Redhook, Queensbridge, South Jamaica and Vladeck Houses. See Anthony Jackson A Place Called Home: A History Of Low Cost Housing In Manhattan (Massachusetts Institute Of Technology; Cambridge, 1976) and especially Part Three.
 8. 'The bill called for the appropriation of seven hundred million dollars to be administered by a US Housing Authority. To local government housing authorities loans and grants will be made for plan, construct and manage developments of decent homes for the lowest income groups', Julian E. Berla, 'Public Housing For America' American Magazine Of Art September 1937; vol.xxx, no.9.
 9. 'It will take courage to let our minds be bold and find ways to meet the needs of the Nation. But for our Party, now as always, the counsel of courage is the counsel of wisdom. If we do not have the courage to lead the American people where they want to go, someone else will. Here is one third of a nation, ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed - Now!', Roosevelt's speech was to the Democratic Party at the Mayflower Hotel, New York, on March 4th 1937. Quoted in James MacGregor Burns Roosevelt: The Lion And The Fox 1882-1940, p.299.
 10. *ibid.*
 11. See note 77, Chapter 3.
 12. See Stuart Hall, 'The State In Question', in Stuart Hall et al The Idea Of The Modern State (Open University Press; Milton Keynes, 1984), pp.1-28. 'In modern liberal-democratic states, legitimacy involves the forms through which the citizens are represented or agree by formal electoral procedures that the State should exercise power. This means that any state which successfully monopolises the claim that it "gives the people what they want" is well-placed to confer legitimacy on its own powers and policies', p.17. For a discussion of the 'welfare state' see 'Justifying The Welfare State' by Tony Walton, *ibid.*, pp.110-130.
 13. Again, the question of the dualism 'discursive/extra-discursive' arises. The powerful residue of this dualism remains active, constructing antinomy where complementarity is intended. While Laclau and Mouffe's

- extension of the concept of discourse is an advance in that it does away with the traditional Marxist dualism between 'material' and 'ideological' which could work to isolate phenomena as 'non-discursive' and hence posit its 'natural' or 'endogenous' laws of development (e.g. 'the forces and economic relations of production' and by conceptual subsumption 'the supersession of classes', and the entire 'stagist' schema of Marxist theory), this inclusive concept of discourse requires some mechanism for differentiation between discourse as 'speech' or as 'practice' or as 'material form', etc.
14. The Public Works Administration also became involved with slum clearance and housing project development because of the recognised cost of slum-life to the State; 'wherever these slums occur, the municipal costs of police and fire protection, the courts and health services are excessive', quoted in Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz New Deal For Art, p.52.
 15. Federal Art Project: A Summary Of Activities And Accomplishments, p.4.
 16. Seven American Women: The Depression Decade, by Karal A. Marling and Helen A. Harrison, p.28. According to the authors, Marion Greenwood's 'revolutionary sentiments expressed three years earlier in her Mercado Rodriques frescoes, had mellowed into an affirmation that the lot of the agricultural worker could be improved under such federal programs', p.29.
 17. Quoted in The New Deal For Art, p.2.
 18. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
 19. Seven American Women: The Depression Decade, pp.9-10.
 20. See Louis Althusser, op cit., pp.170-173. In the light of Laclau and Mouffe's critique of the base/superstructure formulation in Marxist theory - including the Althusserian current - we may no longer be able to salvage the notion of 'the real relations of production' to which 'ideologies' are related. For a discussion of this, see Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, 'Antagonism And Objectivity', pp.122-127 and 'The Democratic Revolution', pp.152-154. Instead of the notion of 'contradiction in the Real', Laclau and Mouffe start from Lucio Colletti's distinction between 'real opposition' and 'logical contradiction', arguing that in the case of the former it is the terrain of real objects: 'A - B', while in the latter, it is the terrain of the discursive proposition 'A - notA'. The concept of the 'contradiction in the real' as referring to the mode of economic production and its 'expression' in social relations between classes thus mistakes a logical contradiction for a real opposition. 'Antagonism' in Laclau and Mouffe's sense, is necessarily produced at the level of a logical contradiction in discourse. This is discussed further in their distinction between a 'relation of subordination' (that is when an agent is subjected to the decisions of another - an employee with respect to an employer, for example) and 'relations of oppression' (when those relations of subordination have transformed themselves into sites of antagonism), pp.153-4.

21. There is a tension in New Deal State discourse between presenting the programme of the Administration as an a priori 'stage' in the necessary unfolding of the American Democratic Teleology and as the necessary construction of political alliances organised around the Democratic Party and its populist discourses. While the former view allowed the Party to appear as the agent of an already-determined historical development, the latter was required to actually maintain the political coalition upon which the Administration depended.
22. Laclau and Mouffe, op cit.. 'A social and political space relatively unified through the instituting of nodal points and the constitution of tendentially relational identities, is what Gramsci called an historic bloc. The type of link joining the different elements of the historic bloc - not unity in any form of historical a priori but regularity in dispersion - coincides with our concept of discursive formation. Insofar as we consider the historic bloc from the point of view of the antagonistic terrain in which it is constituted, we will call it an hegemonic formation', p.136.
23. That is to say, we can speak of a 'logic of equivalence' constructing the unity of that which constituted 'the New Deal': Federal Art Project/ Rural Resettlement Administration/National Recovery Administration, etc = The New Deal. This unity also constructed antagonisms both within the State and outside it: e.g. the Supreme Court veto of parts of New Deal legislation; sections of the Southern Democratic Party, Wall Street interests, Hearst Press, etc.
24. Alex Williams to Cahill, March 4th 1936. FAP/DC56/AAA.
25. ibid..
26. Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz in The New Deal For Art have a different title for the mural: Cultural And Recreational Activities Of A Community Center, p. 53. The title Work And Play comes from a Federal Art Project statement introducing the mural. FVOC/1089/AAA.
27. 'Narration' should be understood to mean both 'illustration' and 'articulation'. As Laclau says in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory: 'Each one of the new sectors in struggle will try and reconstitute a new ideological unity using a "system of narration" as a vehicle which disarticulates the ideological discourses of the opposing forces', p.103. His note devoted to Jean-Pierre Faye's book Langages Totalitaires is also instructive: 'To narrate the action is not just to "write together" - as Thucydides would have it: syngraphien; the different witnesses who are also actors (or acting), change their action by the differences being narrated', pp.16 and 39.
28. Laclau's notion of the 'articulatory principle' of discourse has changed significantly between Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory and Hegemony And Socialist Strategy. In this book, co-written with Mouffe, the notion of an essential class discourse is rejected as part of the baggage of a reductionist Marxism. It is replaced by the concept of 'nodal points' which suture together elements as 'moments' in a dis-

- course and which function according to contingent condensations and displacements. 'The practice of articulation; therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning, and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity', p.113.
29. 'Work And Play'. FVOC/1089/AAA.
 30. The sheer repetition of the term 'community' is likely to lead one to presume the object actually exists.
 31. 'Work And Play'.
 32. *ibid.*.
 33. See note 28.
 34. 'Work And Play'.
 35. *ibid.*.
 36. *ibid.*.
 37. *ibid.*.
 38. *ibid.*.
 39. *ibid.*.
 40. *ibid.*.
 41. As Roland Barthes says in Mythologies (Granada; London, 1982), '...it is again this duplicity of the signifier which determines the character of the signification. We know that myth is a type of speech defined by its intention (I am a grammatical example) much more than by its literal sense (My name is Lion); and that in spite of this, its intention is somehow frozen, purified, eternalised, made absent by this literal sense (The French Empire? Its just a fact: look at this good Negro boy who salutes like one of our own boys). This constituent ambiguity of mythical speech has two consequences for the signification, which henceforth appears both like a notification and like a statement of fact', p.124. The same could be said of the term 'community': 'Community? Its just a statement of fact. How could we have things called Community Centres without communities?
 42. Olin Dows 'Art For Housing Tenants' American Magazine Of Art November 1938; vol.xxxi, no.11.
 43. *ibid.*. Large windows allowed far greater surveillance by the State security forces, as well as providing the dwellers with a vista or perhaps even with 'an urban picturesque' - see Andy Lowe and Owen Gavin 'Designing Desire - Planning, Power And The Festival Of Britain', Block 11, 1986.
 44. 'Art For Housing Tenants'.
 45. The article continued 'In the center of one court you will see a shallow fountain with four black cast stone penguins preening themselves on the edge. Playing children sprawl about their rounded forms...many little Negro children play in the sun'.
 46. *ibid.*. Dows talks of a mural at the Atlantic City Housing Project called Education Of The Colored Man, by Aaron Douglas.
 47. According to Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *op cit.*, the tenants association at the Harlem River Houses project objected to the figure of the negro male, 'naked to the waist' and 'kneeling with a cog-wheel' and pronounced it 'undignified', p.53.

48. The mural covered 325 square feet. Greenwood had gained international recognition after completing four fresco murals covering 3000 square feet in the decoration of the new civic centre 'Mercado Ródriges' in Mexico City under the sponsorship of the Mexican Government.
49. 'Blueprint For Living' statement, November 28th 1940. FVOC/1087/AAA.
50. *ibid.*.
51. According to Park and Markowitz, *op cit.*, Redhook Housing Project in Brooklyn had commissioned Marion Greenwood to produce a mural entitled Planned Community Life and its themes was 'a call for space, light, beauty, and collective order, an environment in which the various needs of the individual are effectively reconciled with social needs', p.54.
52. *ibid.*, p.54.
53. By December 1939 more than 9000 persons left their 'substandard homes' to occupy 2545 apartments in one of the most 'advanced' low cost housing projects: Redhook. There were other housing projects with federal art placements, such as the Williamsburg Project, Brooklyn, with abstract murals by Stuart Davis, Jan Matulka, Willem deKooning, Eugene Morley, Albert Swinden, Ilya Bolotowsky and Paul Kelp. At Camden, New Jersey, the Westfield Acres Housing Estate contained a federal mural by Marion Greenwood consisting of a study of workers in the Camden shipyards. The theme of the mural, according to Karal A. Marling and Helen A. Harrison, *op cit.*, p.29, was the right to collective bargaining guaranteed under New Deal legislation. For
54. It is important not to mistake this equivalence for an identity or a reduction. As Foucault says: 'there is neither analogy or homology, but a specificity of mechanism and modality...none of its localised episodes may be inscribed in history except by the effects that it induces on the entire network in which it is caught up', Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison, pp.26-7.
55. New Deal For Art, p.45.
56. *ibid.*, p.45.
57. *ibid.*, p.45.
58. Seven American Women: The Depression Decade, p.23.
59. We must also specify inter- as opposed to intra-subjectivities. While the Federal Art Project attempted to produce an equivalential positionality between, say, one subject as 'factory-worker' and another as 'artist-worker', it also attempted to condense differential positions in unitary subjects: i.e. the 'citizen-subject' could be both 'factory-worker' and 'artist-worker' when the division of labour was sufficiently eroded.
60. Quoted in New Deal For Art, p.46.
61. This can be understood as an hegemonized 'cultural exchange value'. Laclau and Mouffe say 'the dominant discourse in consumer society present it as social progress and the advance of democracy to the extent that it allows the vast majority of the population access to an ever-increasing range of goods. Now, while Baudrillard is right to say that we are "ever further

- away from an equality vis-a-vis the object", the reigning appearance of equality and the cultural democratization which is the inevitable consequence of the action of the media permit the questioning of privileges based upon older forms of status', Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, pp.163-4.
62. 'We do our part' was the slogan of the New Deal's National Recovery Administration which attempted to revive America's economy after 1933. It was paired with the famous blue eagle iconic symbol. For a particularly interesting example of the 'We do our part' articulation of New Deal discourse, see Pare Lorentz (ed) The Roosevelt Year: A Photographic Record (Funk and Wagnells; New York, 1934) and especially pp.85 & 87.
 63. Quoted in New Deal For Art, p.48.
 64. See Philippa Whiting 'Speaking About Art' American Magazine Of Art August 1935; vol.xxviii, no.8. According to Park and Markowitz, the murals planned by Shahn and Bloch 'intended to portray what had been done in penal reform and modern administration... as contrasted with the old methods of segregation, idleness and social vengeance', p.55.
 65. See Michel Foucault Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison, p.193.
 66. New Deal For Art, p.55.
 67. ibid., p.55. Harold Lehman also said 'A painting designed for a public institution should be related in subject matter to the nature of the institution... Rather does it appear in this particular instance [the prison mural] the most effective theme might possibly be one further removed in character from that of penalization, crime and the criminal act, etc', p.55.
 68. ibid., p.56.
 69. The entire New York World Fair was a phantasmised construction intended to portray a sense of such a non-antagonistic technologically-determined society. See Chapter 6.
 70. Seven American Women: The Depression Decade, p.22.
 71. ibid., p.22. As is pointed out by the authors 'Women's life as Bloch had intended to depict it was not at all like the course she herself had followed. It consisted of motherhood, or family life, predominantly, and while it also included the 'working woman', it did not portray the sort of specialised professional career in which the artist was engaged', p.22.
 72. ibid., p.22.
 73. ibid., p.23. Also see 'Jail Job', Time October 21st 1936.
 74. Lucienne Bloch 'Murals For Use', in Art For The Millions pp.76-77. She continued 'Discussion with the psychiatrist in attendance and many conversations with the inmates revealed with what sarcasm and suspicion the latter treated the mention of art - as something 'high brow', indicated to what extent art in the past had been severed from the people and placed upon a pedestal for the privilege of museum students, art patrons, and art dealers... To combat this antagonism it seemed essential to bring art to the inmates by relating it closely to their own lives. Since they were

- women and for the most part products of slums and poverty, I chose the only subject which would not be foreign to them - children - framed in a New York landscape of the most ordinary kind. It could be by Uptown, Downtown, East Side or West Side - any place they choose. The tenements, the trees, the common dandelions were theirs', p.76.
75. Report by Audrey McMahon on the Federal Art Project, 1939. NDA/15/AAA. An exhibition was held in San Francisco entitled 'The Opportunity For Pictorial Art In Modern Medicine'. HC/1106/AAA.
 76. New Deal For Art, p.50.
 77. ibid., p.51.
 78. For an interesting and near-contemporary account of the Tennessee Valley Authority, demonstrating the populist discourses through which it was represented in the New Deal,, see Julian Huxley's TVA:Adventure In Planning (Architectural Press; Cheam, 1943) and especially the chapter 'Planning By The People', pp. 129-131.
 79. New Deal For Art, p.49.
 80. ibid., p.49.
 81. ibid., p.50.
 82. ibid., p.50.
 83. ibid., p.50.
 84. ibid., p.50.
 85. ibid., p.50.
 86. For a full discussion of the relations between the Roosevelt Administration and the CIO, see David Milton The Politics Of US Labor: From The Great Depression To The New Deal (Monthly Review Press; New York, 1982) and especially Chapters 4, 5 & 6.
 87. This was made easier by the Popular Front policy of the Comintern, adopted in 1935. For a discussion of this, see Serge Guilbaut's How New York Stole The Idea Of Modern Art, Chapter 1. The policy of Popular Frontism in America enabled Roosevelt to gather to him Communist and Socialist opponents who before 1935 had regarded the New Deal as 'social fascist'. After 1935 Earl Browder, leader of the American Communist Party, propogated the slogan 'Communism is twentieth century Americanism'. For a discussion of this, see Daniel Aaron Writers On The Left (Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.356-364.
 88. For example, the controversy over August Henkel's mural installed at Floyd Bennett Airport, Brooklyn and removed by official order. See Chapter 7.
 89. McMahon to Cahill, January 30th 1936. FVOC/1084/AAA.
 90. ibid..
 91. ibid..
 92. Chapter 6 discusses federal art created for the WPA Pavilion at the New York World Fair in 1939-40 - all of which was destroyed without the artists' permission and on the orders of the New York administrator of the Works Progress Administration, Colonel Brehon Somervelle, who was convinced that the Federal Art Project was run by communists.
 93. New Deal For Art, p.51.
 94. We shall here be considering psychoanalytic and psych-

- iatic discourse in terms of their function as disciplinary techniques. As Foucault says 'All the sciences, analyses or practices employing the root 'psycho-' have their origin in this historical reversal of the procedures of individualisation. The moment that saw the transition from the historico-ritual mechanisms, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible is the moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented...' Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison, p.193.
95. Alex R. Stavenitz, Director of Art Teaching Programme of the Federal Art Project, in an open letter advertising the exhibition, October 19th 1938. FVOC/1085/AAA.
 96. New Deal For Art, p.50. See also Gertrude R. Benson 'Portraits Of Psychotics! Art And Psychiatry', American Magazine Of Art August 1937; vol.xxx, no.8.
 97. To my knowledge, no illustrations of their art survive and I have no information about titles of works commissioned for the Project.
 98. Ester Levine, research project, FVOC/1084/AAA. She went on 'the patient regresses to a primitive mode of existence. He becomes narcissistic, giving attention merely to his body. On the way back to this very primitive mode of existence other primitive attitudes are revived, the stages of psychosexual development, i.e. the oedipus complex and homosexual trends. He is overwhelmed by primitive libidinous problems and a disturbed ego function'.
 99. *ibid.* She continues 'Since, therefore, the culture largely determines the development of the person it is necessary that he will be well-versed in it to be able to add something to it himself.'
 100. Sherry Turkle, in Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud's French Revolution (Burnett; London, 1979) says: 'American psychoanalytic ego psychology, directed toward an active adaptation of the patient to reality, toward what became known as 'coping', brought Freudianism into line with American beliefs about the virtue and necessity of an optimistic approach...it promised that self-improvement was possible without calling society into question', p.7. She continues 'In America, a special mix of optimism, individualism and voluntarism contributed to the acceptance of a psychoanalytic therapy founded on the belief that people can change themselves by their own efforts if they want to. American individualism tends to represent the individual as a virtuoso or entrepreneur of him or her own self...Americans believe in the plasticity of the individual who could learn to conform; that which is not malleable, or suitable for reshaping, is often dismissed. Americans accepted psychoanalysis, but they shaped it to their own image of what would be "helpful" p.7.
 101. Leonard Garfinkle, research project. FVOC/1084/AAA. He

- says: 'The murals then function as part of the psychiatric procedure of the ward. If it is to act as a releasing agent for the patients, it is of prime importance that their illness be understood by the artist'.
102. *ibid.* Garfinkle's 'Jungian' approach continues '... It can stimulate group discussion and become the emotional experience of all. It can release instinctual impulses into forms socially acceptable to the group and can be discussed openly on that basis'.
 103. Lacan's analysis, according to Turkle, traced most of ego psychology's problems and contradictions to this idea that there is an 'objective', 'knowable' reality: 'One understands that to prop up so precarious a conception, individuals on the other side of the Atlantic should have felt the need to introduce into it some stable value, some standard of the measure of the real: this turns out to be the autonomous ego. This is the supposedly organised ensemble of the most disparate functions that lend their support to the subject's feelings of inateness. It is regarded as autonomous because it appears to be sheltered from the conflicts of the person (non-conflictual sphere)', quoted in Sherry Turkle Psychoanalytic Politics, p.54.
 104. 'The Therapy Of Art'. FVOC/1091/AAA. It begins: 'William came into my class, a problem child from the beginning...'
 105. *ibid.*
 106. *ibid.* According to Druckerman, 'no more bleeding warriors and scenes of destruction. I do not know how long this new mood will last but obviously William is developing.'
 107. 'Art And The Problem Child', by Dr. Frank J. Curran, from the Children's Ward of the Psychiatric Division of Bellevue Hospital, no date, but probably 1936. HC/1107/AAA.
 108. *ibid.*
 109. *ibid.*
 110. *ibid.*
 111. *ibid.*
 112. *ibid.*
 113. *ibid.*
 114. *ibid.*
 115. *ibid.*
 116. *ibid.*
 117. *ibid.* He continues 'The child artist who painted the first picture reproduced here was a socially maladjusted delinquent boy of 12, restless, haunted by his desires and trying to find peace in his paintings which he could not realise in life. In studying the art of schizophrenic children we approach the deepest problems of Art. A 10 year old girl with such a disease was dissociated in her speech and thought. She often talked of a mysterious "brain body" within her which she depicted with crayons like a bone. She complained that she was in an unreal world and she wanted to escape. She was distrustful of everything about her and saw magic relationships between things and persons which others failed to see. She was dis-

- atisfied with this world, having been neglected by a psychopathic mother and her delusional ideas of a brain body tended to satisfy her unconscious desire for a boy's penis or for a child of her own which might compensate for the rejection by her mother... Discontent with the forms at her disposal she continually experimented. Thus, when asked to copy a simple triangle or quadrangle, she added queer appendages so that her final form looked like the fantastic world of Tanggy or like queer flowers. She experimented also with colors of the rainbow arranged in fantastic but still geometric forms which reminded us of the experiments of cubism. It is as if she would say "I want to go back to a primitive world of circles ovals, waves, spirals and to create this world of mine anew". In describing to us this picture of hers which we are reproducing...she said "This is a roni which is not a macaroni". Thus one sees that she was not only experimenting with forms and colors but with words...'
118. *ibid.*...'...At such times she drew a number of astonishing portraits of persons around her. She seemed to see only the characteristic traits of the individual and to see them so exclusively that she had clung to the characteristics in order to retain her contact with the real person. The therapeutic value of such an activity is evident...'
119. *ibid.*..
120. *ibid.*..
121. Turkle says 'Psychoanalysis was welcomed in America, particularly in urban America, which had to come to terms with rootlessness, with geographic and social mobility from within, and from immigration from without. In the American nation of immigrants, psychoanalytic absorption in the history of the individual helped to compensate for the absence of a collective past...' , *op cit.*, p.29.
122. Interview between Audrey McMahon and Marie MacDonald, January 28th 1938, Station WEVD, New York. DCM/1105/AAA.
123. *ibid.*..Audrey McMahon continued, 'let us for a moment envisage 5000 children crowded into a dreary assembly hall every morning; or thousands of prisoners eating in a bleak mess hall with the barrenness of their surroundings adding to the bleakness of their lives; or old folks on the city's welfare island whiling away their hours in a barren recreational hall. Then envisage those same dismal surroundings enlivened by works of art that are not only socially and historically valuable as permanent marks of the age we live in, but are intrinsically valuable as art creations lending beauty to otherwise drab surroundings and often drabber lives...our murals tell the story of the time and have the same integrity and long after we are dead and buried, these works will live on and interpret our age to those who come after...'
124. 'Is America Art Conscious?' Radio Interview of Mary Hutchinson, technical supervisor of Painting and Drawing on the Art Teaching Staff of the Federal Art Project, August 12th 1938, Station WEVD, New York. DCM/1105/AAA.

125. Again, see Mike Davis 'Why The US Working Class Is Different' New Left Review 123 September-October 1980. See Chapter 3, note 34.
126. For a discussion of 'the isolation effect', see Chapter 3, note 79.
127. A test of the New Deal's power to construct such an expansive hegemony based on its capacity to neutralise previously antagonistic terms is that of the extent to which it could absorb the two subject-positions 'capitalist' and 'unionized worker' and reconstruct them as equivalent terms of simple difference.
128. Michel Foucault Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison: 'The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body', p.30.

CHAPTER 5

Indexing American Design:
The Statization Of Subjects/History/Territory

In the preceeding analyses of the operation of the Community Art Centre programme and the strategic assignment of Federal art and artists to a network of institutional sites concerned with penal, pedagogic and medical/psychoanalytic practices we observed what can be characterised as the State's capacity to 'territorialize' the subject: to reconstruct individual subjects as the Citizen-Populace of the Nation-State of America ¹ .

This reclamation of the subject by the State through an ensemble of techniques of coercion and representation involved the construction of an expansive hegemonic discourse ² . This articulated a plurality of subject-positions around the nodal points of Citizenship, the National-Popular and the Democratic Tradition ³ . It also constructed a corresponding 'subjectification of territory': the anthropomorphization of the Land as personality. These two operations, the territorialization of the subject and the subjectification of territory were not separate or exclusive; rather, they implied each other ⁴ . The symbolic investment of the Land condensed, as we shall see, 'nation', 'State' and 'body', cathecting to it a matrix of territories and temporalities. Within this process, the Index Of American Design, as a subsection of the Federal Art Project, functioned as one more tactic in the struggle over the meaning of 'America' fought during the 1930s. The Index was to operate as one more site for the State's investment of the subject 'in

depth' ⁵ as the stable repository of American Traditions, Beliefs, Histories and Values, in the struggle over contemporary and historical 'reality' ⁶ .

The Index Of American Design, conceived contemporaneously with the Federal Art Project itself in mid-1935, was to serve a plurality of functions, articulated through the Index's role as a unifier ⁷ . In the Index's Operational Manual, we hear that the project was to:

'compile, by accurate black and white and colored drawings and by photographs, a pictorial record of objects of American origin in the decorative, applied and folk arts'

8

The Index's task was to assemble a coherent history, an organic corpus of traditional American activities and would do so in a way which explicitly prescribed an anti-modernist representational practice and ideology and which was concerned to erode the concomitant 'modern' distinction between different areas of cultural production ('fine art'/'folk crafts', etc) because of a belief in their 'equal' 'contribution' to the development of American culture and history ⁹ .

The Index Of American Design, the manual said, was a systematic reclamatory exercise, it sought to restore:

'material of historical significance, which has not heretofore been studied and which is in danger of being lost'

10

Both subjects and cultural artefacts, then, are considered 'terrains' to be traversed by the State in its salvaging operation: objects to be retrieved from the chaos of an unplanned urban industrial capitalist economy and from the colonial and post-colonial-imperialism ¹¹ of Western and

Central Europe, seen as the locus of the alienating economic and cultural orders imposed on America ¹² . This 'America' becomes itself Subject; the Index Of American Design is to:

'get a body of traditional material which may form the basis for an organic development of American design' ¹³

The recurrence of the motifs of 'the body', 'the organic' and 'the natural order' within the discourses of the Index Of American Design and throughout the other divisions of the Federal Art Project signify the equivalential logic constructed by the discourses on Nation, State and Subject ¹⁴ : all six terms displace readily into each other and condense within them the hegemonic articulation constituting the 'National-Popular' interpellation ¹⁵ .

DESIGNING AMERICAN TRADITION

The art writer Constance Rourke was placed in charge of the Index Of American Design in 1935 ¹⁶ as the national director in Washington ¹⁶ . The artist Ruth Reeves ¹⁷ was made the national co-ordinator until succeeded the following year by C. Adolph Glassgold ¹⁸ . In 1936 Phyllis Crawford drew up the Index Of American Design Research Guide Manual, a set of ordinances which we shall return to later. As Holger Cahill had explained in an essay after the Second World War, the development of interest in American folk art and design had not begun with the creation of the Index Of American Design, but could be

traced back to the collections started by John Cotton Dana at Denver (1891), Springfield (1898) and Newark (1908) ¹⁹ . According to Cahill, by 1916 people were asking: 'What is American? Is there anything recognisably American aside from Indian materials?' ²⁰ . In that year the New York Public Library established its own picture collection. The importance attributed to the Index Of American Design by Cahill himself was shown in a letter he wrote to Ruth Reeves in August 1935 ²¹ . It concerned the staffing of the project:

'We would have to get people who knew the field thoroughly, who love it, and who are experts...I would like to put to work at once on this idea such photographers as Ed Steichen, Charles Sheeler, Walker Evans and all those who are deeply interested and have done a lot of work in this field' 22

The Index Of American Design was considered so important by the director of the Federal Art Project because, more than any other division of the Project, the Index was to operate as a formal codifier of 'nationality' and 'territory' and it would 'narrate the nation' as 'itself' a coherent, integrated story, with the inscription of connectedness, wholeness and unity implying, as Trachtenberg says, the 'telos of closure of a justifying meaning at the end of the tale' ²³ . The Index Of American Design was to restore not only the Past, but also the Future, articulating the unities of Nation, State and the 'National-Popular' tradition in America ²⁴ .

The Index was to construct a national tradition of design, to articulate a unity-through-diversity across the

body of America; it was to organise through its national, state and local structures of power and command that regularity-in-dispersion constituting the unity of its discourse ²⁵ . While its regional strategy might involve for the inhabitants of Vermont:

'a consciousness of the fine art tradition
of native crafts' ²⁶

and in California and Arizona the recovery of the tradition of basket weaving ('these people are fast disappearing' ²⁷), these punctual subjects and practices were to be interpellated and articulated as also/primarily national-subjects and subject-to-the-Nation-State embodied in the national administration of the New Deal. Indeed, this national interpellation through the Index Of American Design was the necessary condition for the construction of state and local identifications. Such a nationalising project therefore required a centralised and hierarchic bureaucratic-machinery through which to construct the regularities and unities of 'America' from among a plurality of differences constructed without opposition ²⁸ . With a fairly constant total of five hundred artists employed by the Index making drawings and taking photographs of America's cultural artefacts and with Ruth Reeves as national coordinator, Cahill was content that the project could be 'national in scope' and operate on a 'national scale' ²⁹ . This organisation of State power in the Index Of American Design was made clear in a 1937 manual. Through the appointment of regional and state directors by the Washington staff of the Index Of

American Design, working in conjunction with state Federal Art Project directors, a chain of hierarchically-delegated power was established to enforce national policy and centralised State priorities. It was stated:

'the regional and state directors of the Federal Art Project will initiate the work of the Index Of American Design. Designation of personnel to assignments on the Index is the responsibility of these directors, who will exercise supervision over the Index, assist in making contacts with museums, libraries, historical societies and private collections. They will advise as to the selection of materials. All communications to Washington for direction and information will be cleared through the Regional and State art directors. All finished Index plates will be cleared through them. They will check all plates for quality of rendering and accuracy of research and will assume the duty of forwarding them to Washington.'

30

The importance of 'research' was stressed: objects belonging to no legitimate 'portfolio'³¹ were to be avoided as they lacked a discernable 'history' of their own³². Such a 'history' of the object consisted of such disparate concerns as the 'personal history of the craftsman', 'local economic developments' and any 'detailed item of interest' relating to the materials themselves³³. Especially stressed were personal anecdotes relating to the objects, considered as the link to the 'real life' of the people', animating the objects and indicating their historical utility in the development of the American nation³⁴. Legitimate design topics included: late eighteenth century wood sculpture, Shaker crafts, Spanish-colonial, Pennsylvania-German, fashion in New York 1820-1870, mid-eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century stone ware in New York State

and New Jersey, weathervane design, small wood carvings, puppets and marionettes, toys and dolls, New England embroidery and lighting devices, textiles, Hitchcock and related design chairs, crafts of distinct cultural religious and economic groups such as the Moravian sects in Pennsylvania and the Jansenists in Illinois ³⁵. If there was to be 'found' an American tradition in design, Cahill argued in 1936, then it would be among this apparently inchoate mass of immigrant materials ³⁶. The authentic American culture was to consist of a distillation of 'old world' practices and traditions transmuted by the new conditions of the land and the 'new world' whose opportunities provided the people with their democratic imagination ³⁷. But the prospects for such a 'discovery' (always a revelation, never openly a construction) were considered tentative. If 'America', through the various New Deal State agencies, was only slowly emerging from out of the constraints of European influence and dependency - in economic, political and cultural terms - then the emergence of 'American History' was similarly in an early stage and still threatened by the residual power of European civilisation. Constance Rourke argued in an essay in 1937:

'In the long and chequered controversies over American art the words "indigenous" and "autochthonous" have fought their way into our aesthetic vocabulary slowly. It is too soon to say whether they will stay here...' 38

And yet, if these remnants of settled immigrant cultures in America were not themselves a 'tradition', they were to be conceived as 'basic elements' for an American

Design ³⁹ . Although fragmented and heterogenous, scattered and decimated, together they might still constitute a source - cultural protocols - for an emergent tradition of America: as Nation, Land and People. Such a discourse may be characterised as one of strategic deferral, articulating a logic of equivalential temporalities - the Past, the Present, the Future - instituting and inscribing a new historicity, a new spatial-temporal matrix specific to America and the New Deal nation-State ⁴⁰ . This re-ordering of historicity and tradition in America was an open and declarative operation, underlining the positivity which the Federal Art Project, as part of the New Deal, attempted to institute through its non-antagonistic discourses.

Holger Cahill, speaking at the tenth Anniversary Conference Of The American Institute Of Decorators, in Boston, in January 1941, had announced:

'The Index Of American Design represents an endeavour to recover a usable past in the decorative and popular arts of our country. The Index is redistributing a rich native design heritage which we had all but forgotten in our frantic and fashionable search for aesthetic fragments of European and Asiatic Civilisation'

41

And if the press coverage given to the Index didn't always (or usually) reach the informative and historical standard which Cahill desired, it achieved the aim of articulating the Index as part of the New Deal and as a project committed to the recovery of the nation's history of traditional and constitutive cultural practices ⁴² . While the Washington Post reported 'Colorful Days Of

Colonial Life Depicted In WPA Art Exhibit Reveals
Pioneers Favored Elaborate Birth Certificates, Vests
With Rosebud Decorations AndcNeedlepoint Galuses' ⁴³ ,
the exhibition of Index material held in New York, at
the Rockefeller Centre, Brooklyn Museum, Cooper Union,
the Museum Of The City Of New York and the Metropolitan
Museum was specifically directed to contain objects from
other states in order to articulate the whole as unified
and consistent, indexing/producing the unified nation-
State and the new reality of its territory and
historicity ⁴⁴ .

THE AMERICAN CULTURAL-POPULAR

The rejection of the 'aesthetic fragments' of
European and Asiatic civilisation, together with con-
temporary modernist-elitist practices and ideologies
meant, as we have seen previously, the attempt by the
Federal Art Project to construct an authentically
'national' and non-debased 'popular culture'. This was
concomitant with the Index Of American Design's concern,
not with the producers and products of 'high art' and its
European derivations, but with the so-called 'folk' and
'utility' arts, considered constitutive of an apparently
more 'material' culture and seen as instrumental in the
making and remaking of America. These notions congealed
Index discourses around the subject-position 'common
man' and the similarly 'common object'. In so doing,
Index discourses established equivalential relations with
other terms in different New Deal discourses, such as with

Roosevelt's own 'Forgotten Man' ⁴⁵ and with the constructed antagonism in New Deal discourse between 'the People' and fractions of monopoly capital and the State apparatuses ⁴⁶ . It was this 'common man' (remembering its displacement into equivalential subject-positions: worker/family-member/citizen/black, etc) who, through his labour, had made America. According to an article by C. Adolph Glassgold, through:

'...living, working, loving and not infrequently drinking and brawling [47] he helped weld this nation into a coherent unit from numerous unrelated lands, ⁴⁸ and, at times, antagonistic parts...'

The very history of this American democratic process, linked intimately with the concept of the frontier and its masculinization, which we shall return to later, implied also its narration to the popular American audience ⁴⁹ .

According to a lecture given by Cahill in 1937, the popular audience was also a willing participant and in the stage of being released from its urban-capitalist subjection to mass-produced kitsch. 'Rank and file Americans', Cahill said, 'aren't the inert consumers of canned taste that they have been credited with being' ⁵⁰ . Again, the New Deal discourse of 'needs' and 'services' emerges with the State positioned as ethical provider; while the category of the 'cultural expert' - this time, no classicist or modernist, but a responsible, trained agent of the State calculating the people's rights and requirements - was already implied in the selection process through which a national tradition

of Design and Culture was assembled. The Design Laboratory, a separate division from the Index Of American Design, but part of the Federal Art Project, was also established in 1935 with a grant made available by the Rockefeller Foundation ⁵¹. Like the Index, and as with the entire Federal Art Project, this institute represented a new 'cultural-welfare' provision for the people:

'intended exclusively for those who can not afford to pay for their instruction and for underprivileged groups' ⁵²

The Index Of American Design exhibitions, numbering hundreds and perhaps even thousands during the late 1930s, were primarily held in department stores throughout the country. This can be taken to have signified both their 'consumptional' status (though as, in fact, unsellable cultural objects, not mere commodities ⁵³) and also the recognition of the centrality of the store as the contemporary arena for popular intercourse in America ⁵⁴. If the masses were the target, then the site was the store. 'In the more popular sense', an Index press release said:

'the large numbers of exhibitions that have been held in museums and department stores throughout the country have awakened for the first time a true mass enthusiasm for the arts that are linked with our history and mode of life' ⁵⁵

Also, the representations of the cultural artefacts which the Index artists produced and their research notes which accompanied public display, were expected to be 'sincere and honest statements' intelligible to the layman ⁵⁶. Alex Williams, head of the Federal

Art Project publicity office, directed that, like the posters issued by the Design Laboratory, the posters and pamphlets produced by the Index should 'give succinctly and in popular language the objectives and possibilities of the Index' ⁵⁷ .

As has been seen previously, this demarcation between the popular and the elite, and between the popular and the debased, also consisted of a discourse of equivalential points of 'Europeanness', constructed as the cultural Other of 'American'. Expelled as a term of simple difference within the New Deal's hegemonic discourse centred around the subject-positions of People and State-subjectivity, it sometimes never achieved any positivity of its own. The term 'UnAmerican' is the most powerful example of the strength of the hegemonic political and cultural discourse in the United States and when coupled with the term 'activities', signifies only that which cannot be signified or located within the equivalential discourses: it exists on 'the horizon of the Social' ⁵⁸ . However, at the same time, it was the centrality of Europe to America, through its successive waves of immigrants who actually constituted the non-Indian 'native stock', which prevented the too-rapid declaration of the discovery of a fully-formed American culture. 'Elements' they might provide, but truly endogenous relations could only be developed through an apparently infinite progression toward nativity ⁵⁹ . This was why Index discourse always exhibited a negotiated equilibrium of assertion and disavowal. Have we an American Design? 'Plenty-of-answers in the negative, from

many quarters, most of all from those schooled in the great European tradition' ⁶⁰ . Constance Rourke was thus always in the bind between 'native adaptations of these inherited arts' ⁶¹ and the continuous 'invasion of foreign influence', which prevented the possibility of any simple homogeneity ⁶² . For this reason, the Index Of American Design served the specialised function, within Federal Art Project discourse, of naming the Alien in American culture: it spoke, more clearly than any other public section of Federal Art Project discourse about that which the New Deal rejected ⁶³ . While it certainly also articulated the hegemonic positivities of New Deal discourses, it systematically articulated the expelled terms and their relational logics. Thus it attacked Modernism, Europeanism, Industrial-Capitalism and the engendered division of labour in America. In a paper called 'For Art's Sake: Government To Salvage Our National Art Traditions Through The Index Of American Design', by Dorothy Grafly, we hear a summation of the equivalential terms of the antagonistic forces in New Deal America. In the past:

'what counted was not the rightness of forms, but their cost [64]. Millionaires lavished fortunes on Old Masters and antiques [65] while their zest for alien culture almost destroyed the indigenous wealth of American design. Recent events in Europe [66] and depression have forced us to reconstruct our alien art worship, and to concentrate on a future that may yet stem from the ideals of our own beginning. It has been a sorry spectacle that an America, fighting clear of European entanglements, should have all but killed its hard-won culture in European design idolatry' 67

A prime condensate of this constructed antagonistic dis-

course was the Index's specific requirements for object representation, indicative of the Federal Art Project's anti-modernist strategy and paradigmatic of the State's legislative and executive capacity to control the artist's vision and techniques of representation.

THE STATE'S MIMETIC JURISPRUDENCE

The Index Of American Design Manual, in a section entitled 'Preparation Of Plates', enunciates a systematic etiquette for representing the object; it legislates a lawfulness of technique and a corresponding penal code. These legalities amount to a fully-formed Constitution of aim, method and effect for the representation of selected cultural objects. Not only is it profoundly anti-modernist in its insistence on 'fidelity' to the object, the total eradication of the mark of the individual artist and the subpoena that the maker must suppress 'all abstract thoughts attendant on the object',⁶⁸ but it appears to be also anti-mimetic⁶⁸. The ambition of Constance Rourke seemed to be to recover the object despite its illustration. "The picture" is to be avoided', she says:

'Accidental factors of light or shadow are diminished or avoided. As one supervisor remarked, showing a rendering: "This is not a water color. It is a wooden sugar scoop". Another observer added: "You could whittle it"'⁶⁹

With the absence of the mark of the 'artist' in the representation of the object, the subject-position 'artist'

is itself rejected ⁷⁰ . It is replaced by what could be called the 'citizen-with-memory', in the privileged position of having access to the national popular folk tradition and with the responsibility and means provided by the State (as the codifier-of-the-Nation) to disseminate the national popular to the contemporary American people. The Index Of American Design constructed then, the presence of the Past in the Present ⁷¹ . Its denial of the techniques of representation (to the people, if not to the representers who received a tabula rasa of instructions) also involved a denial of the process of selection itself: objects seem to mean things by themselves ⁷² . This national myth-writing, systematic and totalising, articulated objects from a heterogenous past into the national popular Past of the discourses of the Federal Art Project and the New Deal ⁷³ .

To merely present the object 'in its essentials' involved not only its graphic illustration - a simple description - but also its consubstantial historical and social significance in the narration of the development of American culture ⁷⁴ . This doxa consisted of an articulation represented by the Index as necessary and rational, continuous and inevitable ⁷⁵ . If cubism, as the sign of Modernism, denied representation any of these attributes, then the legalities of Index techniques demanded the avoidance of 'novel angles or poses', artists were told to 'simplify high lights and shadows and eliminate accidental reflections, except as these may enhance effects of design...In general, photographers should not try for picturesque

effects' ⁷⁶ . In an article entitled 'The Document As Art' by Hildegard Crosby, it is stated that the Index artist is now a 'disciplined' subject, freed from the Ivory Tower and socially responsible to the People and nation-State. The artist's agency is here functional to the sovereign State and its role as national time-keeper:

'The Index artist is always on a short leash; he is indefinitely disciplined by the object; he cannot even dream of sidestepping his assignment by a personal assertion: a challenging figurine - tempting to exaggeration of form - must remain simply the chalkware figurine'

77

This tempting lasciviousness of the object - to be remembered, but always rejected - leads Crosby to deny the 'artist' any recognition for the 'creative effort' ⁷⁸ involved in Index work. This necessary suppression is that which allows the logic of equivalential subject-positions to operate in Federal Art Project discourses: 'artist's' work in Index terms signifies 'material labour', that which is performed by all citizen-workers: at home (family raising); at work (production of value proper) and at play (reproduction of the conditions of production ⁷⁹). This simple difference between equally necessary activities allows the subject-positions themselves, articulated around the nodal points of citizenship and State-subjectivity, to develop and displace from one to another. In answer to the question she sets herself: is the making of documents a creative activity? she answers that it is because the process of documentation consists of imagining a forgotten

Past in the Present. While she quickly disposes of the activity of the photographer in making 'accurate' representations because it consists of an 'automatic' technology, she says the 'artist' allows his/her mind to become a vessel for a variety of 'historical rememberings' of the National Past ⁸⁰ .

The most successful 'handlings', she says, are those which are the 'most sympathetic', granting the representer something of the function of an actor: 'an actor with the role of a New Mexican Bulto, an Icarian Shoe, a Moravian embroidery, a simple strawberry basket' ⁸¹ . This acting process thus negates the presence of the artist as artist in the representation - a central principle of Modernism - and the fact that these 'actors' play different roles underlines the Index's programme of assembling Unity from diversity, Homogeneity from heterogeneity and Singularity from (and in) plurality.

FRONTIERS OF SUBJECTIVITY

A second modality of the Index representer is that of functioning to recover 'artists' from the Past as citizens of the New World: cultural pioneers striving for a Land of their own:

'In this instance of objects belonging to one general group (such as a sequence of jugs from one patterning) the document maker is like a North European going to a new continent for the first time: at first all the inhabitants look alike to him...'

82

But what unites all the modalities of the function of the Index is the task of assembling the American subject at the intersection of the subject-positions of 'worker'/'citizen'/'family-member'/'artist'. This cultural pioneer from the past condenses all these positions and is represented as a subject unified and self-sufficient, nurtured in an America anterior to urban industrial capitalism and the social division of labour. A unified national-popular tradition and territory implied a consubstantial coherent and identifiable national-popular subject, 'recovered' by the Index to reconstitute a contemporary unity of Land and People in America. This involved a dissolution of the distinction, signified by Modernism, between the 'handicrafts' (popular, material and effective) and the 'creative arts' (elite, idealist and contemplative). The Index Of American Design, as a programmatic 'visual education' ⁸³ was to reveal to the people 'the vital bond' ⁸⁴ between the erroneously divided 'arts' and 'crafts' in the development of American culture and was to aid in the contemporary restructuring of American taste ⁸⁵.

That 'living, working, loving and not infrequently drinking and brawling' common man which C. Adolph Glassgold talked about was the stuff of which America was made: moulded by the Frontier and its 'masculine' demands. The Index was to correct a bias in 'effete' Eastern intellectual proclivities concerning the way in which (and with what) America was made:

'In one sense the Index is a kind of archeology. It helps to correct a bias which has tended to relegate the work of the craftsman and the folk artist to the subconscious of our history where it can be recovered only by digging. In the past we have lost whole sequences out of their story and have all but forgotten the unique contribution of hand skills in our culture' 86

While 'aesthetic criticism' ⁸⁷ had considered such materials as furniture, ceramics, glass, embroidery and textiles as minor or disregarded them altogether, said one press release, the Index project was precisely concerned with the recovery of those traditions and a celebration of the social involvement (and pious anonymity) of the makers ⁸⁸. They constituted a vital missing link in the fragmented aesthetic history of the Nation and must be brought 'into the mainstream of aesthetic discussion' ⁸⁹. Rather like the Forgotten Man of Roosevelt's own discourse, folk art/ists and crafts had a similarly earthy 'forthright quality and honesty' ⁹⁰ which contrasted sharply with the 'more refined but less imaginative arts and crafts produced in important centers for the richest market' ⁹¹. New Deal populism, articulated around the nodal points of faithful citizenship and authentic traditions - like that of the humble weathervane - underpinned the discourses of the Index Of American Design ⁹² :

'This quality is simply the genuine voice of the people - those, that is, who are neither too well off nor too badly off to be fairly independent in matters of taste. The many objects reproduced on these pages from water color drawings by artists on the Index Of American Design reveal a distinctive American character. They have a special flavour like Maine apples, Vermont maple sugar and Golden Bantam Corn' 93

This demonstrates, as had been indicated, the particular capacity of Federal Art Project discourse, and that of the Index, to condense 'nation', 'land' and 'people' as equivalent terms and also the traversing of the subject by the State - its territorialisation - inscribing codes of nationality, historicity, character and destiny.

In Trachtenberg's discussion of Frederick Jackson Turner's 'Frontier Thesis', we see the operation of this anthropomorphosis, of Land into Character ⁹⁴. For Turner, Trachtenberg argues, the frontier is the line of the most rapid and effective Americanization, giving rise to a 'composite nationality for the American people' ⁹⁵. In Index discourse, the People (and through equivalential displacement, the Nation) are the product of their vital interaction with the land. The Land becomes the prime mover for American consciousness. Because of this, urban living and especially East Coast metropolises, are denatured and divided from that which constitutes America and Americans. As was seen in Chapter 3, the return of artists to the Land was the return of artists, as Americans once more, subject to the Land/People. The Frontier, although no longer in practical existence ⁹⁶, was that which had created the People's 'untutored creative instinct' ⁹⁷ and had defined/circumscribed national unity and identity ⁹⁸. The Index Of American Design's attention, turned away from the city and the East Coast, toward the Land and the West, could produce 'a new knowledge of the American mind and temperament' ⁹⁹. In this sense, the term 'country' was actually reconstructed to signify Nation

and People, as the Land was the prime (in some versions, the only) site for the process of adaptation which transformed immigrant Europeans ('UnAmericans') into Americans subject to the Land/Nation/State. According to Cahill, this process involved, necessarily,, a Darwinist natural selection:

'in this country there has been certain necessary eliminations and selections, always because of necessity...the stripping down to a few essentials for travel, the simplification for the small settlement, which have had a highly determining effect' 100

American culture and the American people were the co-products of this historically inevitable process and the 'cause of America' depended on the New Deal's capacity to reactivate an economic, social and cultural adaptive mechanism through which America as nation and people developed ¹⁰¹. The Index Of American Design, as part of the Federal Art Project, operated a strategic intervention at the micro-level of the individual subject, called by one administrator, 'the weakest link in the chain of culture'. A complex ensemble of interpellative mechanisms were activated, hailing individuals as subjects, to contribute to the salvaging of that which was believed to constitute the unity of Nation/Land/State. This salvaging operation had to construct a Future based not on European traditions which had often 'clashed with American sensibilities and heritage' ¹⁰² but on fundamental structures - like 'old Pennsylvania barns' ¹⁰³ - rooted in the Land and inscribed with the true features of a proto-American Design, capable of

assuring a Future 'stemming from their roots in the American soil' 104 .

THE DIFFERENTIAL GENDERING OF THE FRONTIER SUBJECT

Within the Index Of American Design's cluster of interpellations, and as we saw also with the installation of federal art in public housing schemes and penal detention centres, special attention was paid to the articulation of the subject-position 'woman' within the project's discourse. Thus, it would seem that the 'common man', therefore, also condensed the 'common woman'; both as an equal holder of State-citizenship and also as a simple difference contributing to the pluralpositivity of the Social in New Deal America. Whereas in Federal Art Project discourse on public housing, 'woman' was articulated principally as 'mother' and 'family-member', within the Index Of American Design, they were constructed in particular relation to national-cultural production. According to Cahill, in a speech delivered to the Southern Women's National Democratic Organisation in December 1936:

'women have always been and are today,
the great patrons of cultural activities
in this country, and that because of
this fact they have a special respon-
sibility to become sympathetic and dis-
criminating patrons'

105

Women are praised for their contribution to the textile tradition of American history, seen by Cahill as among the first handicrafts made in the country, and as the last to give way before the surge of industrialism.

Similarly, they are important because of the 'time they found' to make woven bedspreads, quilts, embroidery and hooked rugs to 'beatify their homes' ¹⁰⁶. But the visibility of the subject-position 'woman' and the cultural activities with which they are associated always appears within Index discourses as more tentative and negotiated; it never achieves the equality of significance in the chains of equivalential subject-positions granted to those of 'common man', 'worker' or 'citizen'. This is because of the intimacy of the connection and dependency between the 'American subject' and the Frontier consists of an overwhelmingly masculine-sexed position and space. That 'brawling' and 'drinking' characteristic of the Frontier Man operates a socio-sexual closure, limiting its universe of connotational terms, excluding 'woman' as a fully substantive displacement. If the word 'West' was:

'an invention of cultural myth...and...
embraced an astonishing variety of
surfaces and practices, of physiognomic
differences and sundry exploitations', ¹⁰⁷

its equivalential logic did not extend to the subject-position 'woman' and it denied 'woman', despite some references in Index discourse, any substantial role in the 'real' making of America. America was possessed of a masculine physiognomy and the Frontier 'made men' ¹⁰⁸.

Despite this closure expelling 'woman' from the full equivalential discourse on the Frontier within Index discourse, contemporary women in America in the 1930s were encouraged by the project to recognise their identity within the more undifferentiated interpellation of the

'National Popular' ¹⁰⁹ . This was a saturating discourse which articulated all subject-positions, all local territories and all differentiated historicities ¹¹⁰ . According to an article in The Christian Science Monitor, the Federal Art Project was:

'anxious to get in touch with individuals who have in their keeping old time examples of American dress design...By creating an historic consciousness it is hoped that families and individuals will be made aware of their heirlooms and will generously lend them for graphic transcription to the research workers and artists at work upon the Index' 111

Through this individual inspection and recognition, carried out simultaneously across the body of America by the nation's citizens - rich/poor, black/white, male/female, Jew/Christian, etc - a 'general self-recognition would occur; the Nation would recognise itself as a coherent and unified entity, united in non-antagonistic difference. A 'new attitude' would be shown by the people towards 'its' literature, 'its' history and 'its' public characters ¹¹² . Central to this, the Index believed, was the role of the American 'artist/citizen' in revealing contemporary American experience in its fullness ¹¹³ . The art work would reveal people to themselves ¹¹⁴ . Part of the mechanism for the dissemination of the work and the extension of the mission of the Index Of American Design was also itself constitutive of the New Deal national unity. The Index research manual advised the local offices and research centres throughout the country to enlist 'public co-operation' in the work of the Index. 'Valuable' organisations included museums and historical

societies, libraries, women's clubs, art clubs, local Daughters Of The American Revolution members and officials, members and officials of the Colonial Dames and Daughters Of The Confederacy, and private collections¹¹⁵. Through this co-operation the Index and the Federal Art Project in general, was able to represent itself as continuous with an already existing structure of national and local clubs and organisations devoted to the history and culture of the American Past. While articulating these very diverse organisations to its own very specific historical and political project, within the New Deal Administration, it could also appear faithful and conservative, consubstantial with the People and their inherent national fidelity¹¹⁶.

POWER/KNOWLEDGE IN THE INDEX OF AMERICAN DESIGN

The issues surrounding the organisation of the Index's publicity campaigns and public image raise general questions about the management of the visibility of the Federal Art Project as a whole. Beyond that, and in a more theoretical direction, this sheds light on analyses of the internal 'knowledge-structure' of a Federal State agency operating in America during the late 1930s. It becomes obvious from the internal correspondence between the head of Federal Art Project publicity, Alex Williams, and the director himself, that the Index Of American Design was seen as serving a general strategic function of advertising and acquainting the public with the entire Project. This was also true of the structure of

Federal Art Galleries and their exhibitions which could serve to emphasise 'the continuity and cohesion of the entire Federal Art Project' ¹¹⁷ . But, according to Alex Williams, the Index had a special articulatory rôle:

'offering as it does such a wide field of interest both to technicians and the general public...It is an ideal promotional and publicity medium and means of approach for the familiarisation of the public with the entire project' ¹¹⁸

Again, what was stressed in this letter to Cahill was the importance of constructing links between the Index and 'social and patriotic organisations' ¹¹⁹ . Williams believed these could be used to 'secure the co-operation of the public' ¹²⁰ . To further this end, Index portfolios of recorded material and research data were produced and circulated to these organisations in order to engender a greater popular interest in American design ¹²¹ .

As we have seen, the Index often exhibited its materials in department stores across the nation, though on occasion this caused administrative conflict and policy disputes. In March 1937, an Index exhibition was held at the Marshall Field and Company department store in Chicago. According to an Index press release:

'In the galleries of this Department store the whole colorful and varied panorama of American design is brought together for the first time and given fresh meaning and significance' ¹²²

Other exhibitions were held at R.H. Macy and Company in New York, and at the Hotel Commodore ¹²³ . According to one memorandum, Index material was also exhibited in ¹²⁴ England during 'American Week' in 1942. These exhibitions

were designed to appeal to a variety of audiences: inspiration for contemporary designers; valuable research material for the specialist historian; and of course, 'for the man in the street' ¹²⁵, the display was said to have an inherent 'deep human appeal' because 'the arts were created for the home' ¹²⁶. But problems were occurring and the private dialogue within the Index and national Federal Art Project control centres demonstrates the issues about which the policy formulators were most concerned.

For instance, the presentation of the Index Of American Design within its exhibitions across the country was giving its directors cause for worry. Alex Williams believed more care should be taken in the method of organisation for public consumption. This was linked with the policy decision of the Index not to have its activities linked with commercial designers and industrial mass production. The Index had explicitly forbidden its workers to provide specifications for commercial exploitation, yet at an exhibition at R.H. Macy and Company, Williams believed:

'the exhibition of costumes...lacked a certain amount of dignity and official atmosphere which might have repercussions and lead to criticisms based on commercial exploitation of government activity' ¹²⁷

Worse than this, in a confidential letter from C. Adolph Glassgold to Ruth Reeves in August 1936, it appears that a possible scandal had to be averted over the Andrews Company collection of Shaker materials, which the company wished to donate to the Index. Although all the details

are far from certain, the Andrews collection was believed by Glassgold to be tainted with 'questionable business practices',¹²⁸ . He believed that:

'spiritual values, the noble cultural and psychic values of Shaker material can be and have been, with astuteness, converted into hard cash. It is not for nothing that the Andrews have been cultivating Mrs. Force'¹²⁹

Glassgold feared a 'large disagreeable stench'¹³⁰ if the New Deal Administration was in any way associated with a scandal and accused of aiding or conniving in what may have been 'a shady practice'¹³¹ .

Perhaps a combination of these sorts of problems and policy ambiguities led to the attempt to re-organise the publicity office of the Index Of American Design in 1937, in order to institute a more coherent and effective presentation of the aims and activities of the Project. In July 1937, the deputy director of the Federal Art Project, Thomas C. Parker, wrote to Constance Rourke informing her that because the Index seemed to be 'running into difficulties' she was to have all correspondence cleared through Washington¹³² . He argued it was 'just impossible to run an organisation from two different headquarters, particularly when we are dealing with so many states'¹³³ . This re-organisation was intimately linked to the question about the Index Of American Design personnel's own knowledge of the publicity campaign for the project. It may explain the reasons for the need of the Federal Art Project as a whole to employ an entire 'public relations' office to advertise its activities and orchestrate a unified and consistent

representation of the divisions within the Project. While supervisors of programmes were co-operative, Williams argued, they weren't in the main equipped by experience or inclination to consider the publicity needs of their projects ¹³⁴. Furthermore, Williams thought it neither wise nor proper to burden them with public relations issues; rather it was:

'essential that some such publicity organisation...should be put into effect...

In the last analysis the entire program is being conducted for the benefit of the general public and for the better that public is informed the better it is being served'

135

Such a division and set of sub-divisions between 'intellectual' and 'technical' labour within an agency of the State, between the graphic 'representers' who produced the Index plates and the professional public relations officers who then represented the exhibitions and the Index in general to the public is of a very important consequence: it concerns the origins and development of an entire strata of State functionaries employed to construct the visibility of the nation-State ¹³⁶. With relation to the Federal Art Project, it raises the issue of the emergence of a 'managerial' class (albeit fractured) of cultural technocrats, 'experts' functional to the State's capacity to represent people to themselves and to maintain the national-popular as a unified field of representations ¹³⁷. A Mr. Knotts was appointed, Williams says, as, in effect 'the City Editor of the Federal Art Project' ¹³⁸. He had the task of ascertaining that 'no release is given

to the press that does not contain a clear statement of the functional relationship of the subject under discussion with the rest of the Federal Art Project' ¹³⁹ . Poulantzas' definition of the State as a 'factor of cohesion' here achieves a concrete specificity: though a complex, fragmented and conflictual organ, the Index Of American Design operated as a mechanism for internal cohesion through a bureaucratic ordering net, organised for representing national cohesion to the people through its recordings and exhibitions. ¹⁴⁰ .

In a document entitled 'Prospects For The Publication Of The Index Of American Design Of The Federal Art Project', written by Holger Cahill and sent to Mrs. Roosevelt 'for her comments', it is suggested that the New York Metropolitan Museum Of Art was interested in housing the collection of the Index ¹⁴¹ . After all, it already had its own 'American Wing', built during the 1920s and devoted to 'Americana' and could claim to be the biggest and most popular museum in the United States, visited by an estimated onemillion people every year ¹⁴² . To the extent that any museum could be regarded as a fitting repository for a collection of representations of the cultural artefacts which 'made America', the Metropolitan could claim to be the most popular and the least disposed toward the alien culture of modernism rampant across the street at the Guggenheim and the Museum Of Modern Art. But the prospectus was also something of a political tactic, designed to encourage the Roosevelt's own personal support for the continuation of the Index Of American Design and the entire Federal Art Project, threatened by Congress-

ional cuts constantly from 1937 to its eventual demise during the Second World War. For this reason, Cahill had shrewdly calculated that it might be politically efficacious to place the Index collection not at the Metropolitan Museum, but rather in President Roosevelt's own library at the family home of Hyde Park, in New York State. Like Bruce, in charge of the Public Works Of Art Project and the Section Of Painting And Sculpture, Cahill was not unwilling to win political support through such sycophantic manoeuvres. And in an important sense, this was not merely a tactical action designed to enlist the President's support for the Federal Art Project. As a fervent New Dealer, Cahill believed this offer might provide the President with some helpful publicity of his own. 'In historical perspective', Cahill said:

'the home of the President will be linked with that of Jefferson as one who has exerted a profound influence upon the art and culture of this country' 143

Placed in the library at Hyde Park, the Index Of American Design, as symbol of the Government's entire Art Programme and commitment to the Common Cultural Weal, would embody the pictorial record of the folk and decorative arts of the American people. It would 're-emphasise the values and meanings of our Democracy' and articulate them necessarily with the policies and agencies of the New Deal 144 Democratic Administration. More than this, Cahill suggested in the same letter that the Index Of American Design could serve a useful role in the conduct of the nation's foreign affairs 145 . He said:

'the Index can serve as a most effective agent in our present program of cultural relations with the other nations of this hemisphere. If these volumes [of Index plates] can also be placed in the libraries, colleges and museums of the Latin American countries and be circulated through exhibitions in the schools, galleries and public buildings of these countries, they would do much to further a better and friendlier understanding on the part of the Latin American people of the character and spirit of their neighbours to the north' 146

The Index Of American Design, as part of the Federal Art Project, was considered as potentially an instrumental force, not only for the State's reconstruction of an domestic (internal) hegemony, articulating national-popular traditions into its equivalential discourses ¹⁴⁷, but also in its foreign policy discourses and Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbour' strategy in central and south America ¹⁴⁸.

According to Poulantzas, and this seems a useful way of conceiving the activities of the Index Of American Design as a State agency, the State is an 'overcoder' ¹⁴⁹. It serves as a frame of reference within which 'the various segments of reasoning and their supporting apparatuses find homogenous ground for their differential functioning' ¹⁵⁰. While the Index Of American Design 'itself' attempted to construct an homogenous territory, historicity and tradition based on the New Deal nation-State, assembled from a heterogeneity of objects, practices and subjects, it must also be seen as it wished to be seen - as functional to the Federal Art Project and beyond that, to the New Deal State apparatuses in toto ¹⁵¹.

The familiar linking of simple differences together in an expansive equivalential discourse characterises the

Index Of American Design and this field of discourse itself displaces into other divisions within the Federal Art Project. The divisions, differences without antagonism, were to constitute a full positivity articulated around the nation's inherent 'realism' (Modernism is never far away, though as an expelled and antagonistic term). In fact, Constance Rourke argued:

'it may be that we are...probably more conscious of the worth of realism now and more anxious to achieve it. We seem to have come into a phase in which we are more aware of the values of fact' 152

She tells us that it is the young people who now relish and demand realism in their lives. Cahill also believed, as we saw, that children were 'little realists', not prone to 'abstraction' and intimately concerned with 'material things' in their social orbit. The Index Of American Design was similarly dedicated to making 'real' America's history to the people of the 1930s, people naturally curious, it was argued, about the nation's youth and who demanded 'a re-assertion of the democratic spirit which recognises and welcomes the contribution of ethnic groups and the spread of educational facilities' ¹⁵³. The Index Of American Design was to narrate such a history and articulate subject, State and nation in its hegemonizing discourse.

Notes To Chapter 5

1. This chapter is particularly indebted to Nicos Poulantzas' State, Power, Socialism and especially chapter 4 'The Nation', pp.93-120. As he says: 'we have to recognise that there is no Marxist theory of the nation; and despite the passionate debates on the subject that have taken place within the workers movement, it would be far too evasive to say that Marxism has understood the reality of the nation', p.93.
2. This thesis, concerned as it is with State power qua tactical representations of social and historical relations in the United States in the 1930s, should not give the impression that violent physical coercion, the physical shaping and destruction of bodies by the capitalist State, was an insignificant element in the reconstruction of capitalist hegemony in America. For an account of the violent confrontations between the State and the people, see David Milton The Politics Of US Labor: From The Great Depression To The New Deal; Philip Bart (ed) Highlights Of A Fighting History: 60 Years Of The Communist Party, USA (International Publisher; New York, 1979), chapters 2,3,4; and the photographic illustrations in The Roosevelt Year: A Photographic Record, especially pp.108-111; 120-127; 140-141; 154-161. For a theoretical discussion of the tendency of recent Marxist theory to underestimate and undertheorize State violence, see Poulantzas, *ibid.*, pp.28-34, 'The Ideological Apparatuses: Does The State Equal Repression + Ideology' and 'Law And Terror', pp. 76-86.
3. As we saw in the previous chapters, this unity is forged through a process of the 'individualisation' of subjects; for Poulantzas, by a mechanism he called 'the isolation effect' whereby the State simultaneously organises the unity of the dominant classes and fractions while disorganising the unity of the dominated classes and groups as an oppositional force. With this disorganisation completed, according to Poulantzas, the individualised subjects are interpellated as legalised subjects with formal political and national rights and affiliations. For Foucault, 'individualisation' of the subject is a rigorous epistemological strategy producing 'normalisation'. As we have seen, this involves the State-knowledges produced in institutions such as hospitals, prisons and schools, and through such welfare provisions as state housing schemes, etc. See Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison, pp.231-308. Both processes correspond to Laclau and Mouffe's notion of discourse as consisting of a 'regularity-in-dispersion', which describes the national-popular's unifying discourse. As Poulantzas says, 'the national State realises the unity of the individuals of the people-nation in the very moment by which it forges their individualisation', State, Power, Socialism, p.106.
4. If we argue that the notion of territory condenses that co-extensive notion of State as Subject, with subjects-of-the-Subject-State, we can apply Althusser's conception of the 'duplicate mirror-structure of ideology'

entirely; hence:

1. The interpellation of 'individuals' as subjects (i.e. American subjects-of-the-State).
2. Their subjection to the Subject (i.e. the American State-Subject).
3. The mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself (i.e. 'self-recognition' as a key term in Federal Art Project discourse; see this chapter 'Power/Knowledge In The Index Of American Design'.
4. The absolute guarantee that everything is so and that on condition that the subjects recognise what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be alright: Amen - so be it. (See Louis Althusser, op cit., pp. 180-181).
5. The notion of 'investment in depth', taken from Foucault, concerns the construction of individuals as possessing stable or essential subjectivities, which 'take hold' of the individual and propel him/her toward certain subjectivity-defined goals; e.g. the Marxist subject occupies a particular space in Marxism's conception of the central antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist society, with their assigned historical and political tasks: revolution or reaction, etc. Similarly, the Citizen-subject of New Deal discourse is positioned in particular relation to the traditions of American Democracy, 'Manifest Destiny', etc. For an interesting use of this notion, see Andy Lowe and Owen Gavin 'Designing Desire - Planning, Power and The Festival of Britain', Block 11 1986, pp.53-68.
6. Alan Trachtenberg in The Incorporation Of America says: 'The antagonism which concerns men more than any other centers on the word America: a word whose meaning became a focus of controversy and struggle during an age in which the horrors of civil war remained vivid', p.7. Although he is writing about the latter decades of the nineteenth century, it applies equally to the 1930s. In this thesis the term 'America' generally is intended to signify a political and cultural entity, with the possibility of struggle over a range of possible 'America's': e.g. socialist, fascist, etc. See Introduction, note 1.
7. See the three articles about the Index, by Constance Rourke, C. Adolph Glassgold and Charles Cornelius, in Art For The Millions, pp.164-175.
8. Found in FAP/DC53/AAA.
9. As will be seen, the Index was itself a very selective project, and took the decision that the only true native inhabitants of the USA, the Indians, had no place whatsoever in 'American Design'. The place of the Indians in the New Deal in the late 1930s is a very significant barometer of the limits of the national-popular discourse. According to Trachtenberg: 'The Indians projected a fact of a different order from land and resources: a human fact of racial and cultural difference, not so easily incorporated as minerals and soil and timber... Thus, native American Indians differed from Blacks and Asians in several

important regards. Blacks could be understood as a special category of American: formally enslaved but now enfranchised and (presumably) on the way to equality. Chinese, on the other hand, were clear Aliens whose right to occupy space in the country was completely at the mercy of American sovereignty. Blacks and Asians could be understood, also, as capable of productive labor, this being the ground of both fear and competition from labor groups and hope of ultimate assimilation. Both groups were targets of intensifying racial hostility...But the Indian represented a special case in that the right to space lay bound up with the very right to exist', p.27.

10. FAP/DC53/AAA. The Index Of American Design inscribed a national identity through the articulation of elements from the 18th and 19th Centuries into a narrative structure. According to Poulantzas: 'National Unity or the Modern Unity thereby becomes historicity of a territory and territorialization of a history - in short, a territorial national tradition concretized in the nation-State; the markings of a territory become indicators of history that are written into the State', op cit., p.114.
11. For an interesting discussion of traditional theories of Imperialism - J.A. Hobson, V.I. Lenin, see Chapter 6 'Imperialism', by Diana Elson, in The Idea Of The Modern State. The concept of a 'cultural imperialism' is vital for an adequate account of American foreign policy in the twentieth century and although it is the State's involvement with Abstract Expressionism which has attracted the attention of art historians, it is important to trace the conditions for this strategic weapon back to the 1930s and the creation of a strata of cultural managers. This is discussed in this chapter and the next. The theoretical starting point has to be the recognition, as Elson says, that 'imperialism can exist without colonialism, since some states can dominate and exploit each other without military intervention and the creation of colonial regimes', p.154.
12. As well as wanting to escape European cultural dominance, the Federal Art Project also wanted to match its achievement. Mildred Holzhauer, from the Women's and Professional Projects division of the Works Progress Administration and Assistant to the Director of the Exhibition Section of the Federal Art Project No.1, New York City, said 'It seems reasonable to believe that greater familiarity with the roots of our tradition will give American design the same rich individuality which has been characteristic of the best European work'. FAP/DC53/AAA.
13. Paradigmatic of this is Holger Cahill's essay 'New Horizons In American Art', in the 1936 catalogue for the Federal Art Project show at the Museum Of Modern Art. For Cahill, the Project was to cultivate 'a fresh poetry of the soil', p.35.
14. It should be said that the Index was also intended to serve a contemporary commercial purpose, although this

was systematically underplayed in Index discourse. According to Holzhauer, it could provide a repository for designers. 'To make usable source models and this material accessible to artists, designers, museums, libraries and art schools'. There is also the issue of the Index providing relief for the unemployed. Cahill wrote to Frances Pollack, the unit manager of the Art Service Projects, in September 1935 'Can you give me any information regarding the Index Of American Design? I am so eager to have it approved since it offers a catchall for a large number of artists not suitable for any other purposes'.

15. It should also be stressed that the complex relations between the Index, as part of the Federal Art Project and the WPA, and its relations to the rest of the New Deal State apparatuses, were highly complex. It is important to avoid a functionalist account of the operation of the arts projects in relation to Roosevelt's economic strategies for ending the recession. The Federal Art Project was continually threatened both by Congressional cuts in appropriations and by sections of the Democratic Administration itself. Its 'value' was never universally agreed upon and in an important sense, it fulfilled its hegemonic role despite the Roosevelt Administration. The Federal Art Project Archives are littered with what amounts to begging letters to the President appealing against financial cuts and employment reductions. For instance, Lou Bloch, the artist, wrote to Roosevelt in April 1938 'The value of this undertaking is so obvious and its appeal so great to all individuals in any sense related to the purpose of the Index, that it has been highly approved by individuals of every possible political shade, many of whom are perhaps not so friendly to other projects under our general program of the Art Project...won't you stop your cuts?..The cultural loss of an undertaking like the Federal Art Project in all its branches is incalculable, particularly now since the public has recognised its worth and has attributed to your legislative program the establishment of such an enterprise'. FVOC/1086/AAA.
16. Her books included Trumpets Of Jubilee (1927), Trampers Of The Gold Coast (1928), American Humor (1931), Davy Crockett (1934) and Analuban (1936). A free-lance writer, she specialised in American folklore and humour. After her work on the Index, she published Charles Sheeler: Artist In The American Tradition (1938).
17. Reeves straddled both the Index administration and the national committee of the American Artists' Congress, formed in February 1936. This demonstrates the political complexity which the Federal Art Project represented in the 1930s, containing both New Deal Democrats and Communist Party members, as well as a series of intermediate strata of 'liberal' and 'left' opinion. The Popular Front policy of the Comintern, adopted in 1935, was taken up by the American Artists' Congress with the slogan 'For Peace,

- Democracy and Cultural Progress'. See the article 'The American Artists' Congress' by Lincoln Roth-schild, another Federal Art Project administrator, in Art For The Millions, pp.250-252.
18. Glassgold had edited the magazine The Arts (1928-1930) and Creative Art (1930-32). He was the curator at the Whitney Museum 1932-1935. The problem of the nature of 'State personnel' is addressed in the debate between Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband in the pages of New Left Review. N. Poulantzas 'The Problem Of The Capitalist State', NLR 58, Nov-Dec. 1969; R. Miliband 'Reply To Nicos Poulantzas', NLR 59, Jan-Feb. 1970; R. Miliband 'Poulantzas And The Capitalist State' NLR 82, Nov-Dec. 1973. In terms of this thesis, the problem can be posed as the following: to what extent can the policies and actions of the Federal Art Project personnel (qua agents of the State) be directly correlated with class interests? A functionalist reading would consist of a too simple relation of the Federal Art Project to more 'dominant' parts of the State apparatus (say, major economic interventionist sectors) and from them to political classes. In opposition to this, it could be argued that the question of the relations between Federal Art Project directors, such as Cahill, Glassgold and other art project leaders - Bruce, Dows - and 'non-State' art administrators such as Barr Jr., Force, etc were directly and 'functionally' quite similar in the late 1930s. Some were employed by both the State and private museums and art associations - e.g. McMahon, Force, while the Museum Of Modern Art co-operated with the Federal Art Project in the staging of the 1936 'New Horizons In American Art' show.
 19. This essay appears in Erwin O. Christensen The Index Of American Design (MacMillan; New York, 1950)
 20. ibid., p.x.
 21. In 1929 he organised for the Newark Museum - where he was keeper of folk arts - the first major exhibition of American folk painting and sculpture, searching out obscure material in New England, New York and Pennsylvania. In 1932 he published American Folk Art, the catalogue for an exhibition of the collection of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller which he helped form.
 22. Letter by Holger Cahill, no date. FAP/DC53/AAA. He also thought E.M. Benson 'one of the most brilliant writers of the American Magazine Of Art.'
 23. Trachtenberg, op cit., p.13. Although he is talking about the 1880s and 1890s in America, this 'narration-of-nation' was equally as important in the 1930s.
 24. Poulantzas says 'The modern nation further tends to coincide with the State since it is actually incorporated by the State and acquires flesh and blood in the State apparatuses; it becomes the anchorage of State power in society and maps out its contours. The capitalist state is functional to the nation.' State, Power, Socialism, p.99. For a specific discussion of

- the concept of the articulation of popular traditions into a coherent discourse, see Ernesto Laclau 'Towards A Theory Of Populism' in Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory and especially pp. 172-176. Laclau says 'Our thesis is that populism consists in the presentation of popular-democratic interpellations as a synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology', p.172-3. These popular-democratic interpellations consist of non-class ideological elements articulated into a class-based discourse, see pp.160-165.
25. Poulantzas, op cit, : 'the national State now homogenises differences, crushes various nationalities "within" the frontiers of the nation-State and wears away the rugged features of the land that is included in the national territory', p.107.
 26. Nina Collier, an 'in the field' expert, in a letter to Cahill on the Index Of American Design in Vermont, February 1936. The field workers spent their time visiting local Index workers and organising co-operation with public organisations. They would report periodically to Washington and hence were central to constructing and maintaining 'the national unity' which the Index tried to orchestrate among its diverse workers. NDA/AAA.
 27. Collier to Cahill, March 11th 1936. NDA/AAA.
 28. The project left out unassimilable differences such as the native Indian peoples of America. We can add to this the documentation of 'mass cultural forms' from the late 19th Century, considered part and parcel of the industrial revolution.
 29. Cahill to Bruce McClure, no date. FAP/DC53/AAA.
 30. Index Of American Design Manual, Technical Series Art Circular, October 15th 1937. In a passage entitled 'Data Report Sheet', we hear that 'The State Director or Index Supervisor must affix his signature to the Data Report Sheets. Plates without such signatures will be considered incomplete and will be returned'. FAP/DC54/AAA. To further centralise control of Index materials, a Central Planning Project was established in Washington, with the function 'of co-ordinating the work of the various projects, throughout the country. All material collected by the Index Of American Design projects in the various states will be edited and correlated by the Central Planning Project'. In 'Supplement 1 To Federal Art Project Manual', January 1936. FAP/DC54/AAA.
 31. Index Of American Design Manual. FAP/DC54/AAA.
 32. *ibid.* The instructions continued 'excellent renderings lose value if they lack the support of history and identification'.
 33. *ibid.*
 34. According to Frederick Jackson Turner, author of the so-called 'Frontier Thesis', the creation of the nation was the creation of the West. Trachtenberg says, 'according to this argument, 'West' meant the pioneer sturdiness, independence, scorn of social constraint:

- "That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients, that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and evil, and with all that buoyancy and exuberance which comes from freedom", in The Incorporation Of America, p.14.
35. Ruth Reeves says in an article entitled 'Untangling Our Art Traditions', September 10th 1937, 'When discoveries of this kind are made by Index workers, the aim is not merely to make a cold copy of the piece as a specimen of its type, but to restore it to its proper niche in time, to find out its ancestry, its neighbours and relations - in other words to re-establish its proper place in the aesthetic development of this country'. NDA/AAA.
 36. Cahill, in speech to Southern Women's National Democratic Organisation, New York, December 6th 1936. DCM/1105/AAA.
 37. For a discussion of the concept of 'democratic imagination', see Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony And Socialist Strategy, Chapter 4: 'Hegemony And Radical Democracy', pp.149-193.
 38. Constance Rourke 'The Index Of American Design', American Magazine Of Art April 1937; vol.30, no.4. She continued 'In this country such enterprise could seem a special obligation because in our rapid and tumultuous history many of the evidences have been widely scattered or lost'.
 39. Document entitled 'The Index Of American Design', C. Rourke. FAP/DC53/AAA. It continued: 'Here were basic elements of an American Design. Made on American soil...What has happened to these examples? The evidence is now fragmentary and widely scattered, mixed in with other things...but they exist'.
 40. Poulantzas says 'This becomes still clearer if we bear in mind that the State establishes the peculiar relationship between history and territory, between the spatial and the temporal matrix. In fact, the modern nation makes possible the intersection of these matrices and thus serves as their point of junction. The capitalist state marks out the frontiers when it constitutes what is within (the people-nation) by homogenising the before and the after of the content of this closure', State, Power, Socialism p.114.
 41. Holger Cahill, speech on the 10th Anniversary of the American Institute of Directors, Boston, Mass., January 21st 1941. NDA/AAA. In 1941 the Federal Art Project was virtually non-existent. One of the ways that Cahill had always tried to ensure its financial funding was to emphasise its economic and cultural importance and its value to the Roosevelt Administration as a 'shop window' of the New Deal's highest aspirations. This was demonstrated in a letter from Cahill to Ellen S. Woodward (administrator of the WPA) 'Our enthusiasm for the Arts Program and our belief in the far-sighted wisdom of the Roosevelt Administration in conceiving and fostering this program is unabated...The Roosevelt Ad-

- ministration is the first to adequately realise that culture in America is still an infant industry which, through our generous Government support has a possibility of becoming an industry of permanent importance to the people of our nation. This too, at a time when cultures in other parts of the world are threatened by war and other social disasters'.
42. We shall return to the Index Of American Design's publicity machine later in this chapter.
 43. Washington Post, July 7th 1936. In the following sunday's Washington Post, under the headline 'National Museum Displays Art Of Early Settlers', the paper reported 'the next best thing to visiting and dining with notables of the Colonial period is to enjoy some of the same things they enjoyed.'
 44. The question of the specificity of the new spatial-temporal matrix created in America in the 1930s leads one to ask how it was different from earlier matrices. It is beyond the project of this thesis to identify in detail earlier national unities in the United States. The length of a period of a matrix is also a difficult question. Poulantzas says that different modes of production engender different temporal-spatial matrices, with their specific organisation of language and a new relationship of the State to territory and historicity, State, Power, Socialism, p.97. It could be argued that within different modes of production several specific temporal-spatial matrices can develop, in relation to the specific economic and political conjuncture. For example, in the 1920s in America, as a period of relative economic prosperity, it is possible that a different set of temporal-spatial co-ordinates existed (remembered, articulated events, activities, etc) than in the 1930s - the Slump, Roosevelt's first term, Roosevelt's second term and growing recession up to rearmament and Pearl Harbour.
 45. See the discussion of this and other of Roosevelt's speeches in previous chapters.
 46. This would constitute New Deal State ideology as 'populist' in the strict Laclauian sense of a discourse of antagonism constructing an equivalential divide between 'the national-popular' pole and the 'power bloc' understood as the hegemony of monopoly capital, the moral imperative of 'market forces', 'individualism', etc. The issue is complicated by the way in which New Deal discourses changed throughout the 1930s and particularly after 1936, with a loss of Congressional support leading to a lessening of Roosevelt's stridency.
 47. No doubt this persona can be traced further back into American history, to the genre of the cowboy novel and traced further forward through the instantiations of the Abstract Expressionist macho-artist (Pollock, deKooning) through the angst-ridden Karouac, into Clint Eastwood, Rambo, etc. See Roger Cranshaw 'The Possessed: Harold Rosenberg And The American Artist' Block 8 1983, pp.3-10.
 48. 'Recording American Design', C. Adolph Glassgold. HC/1107/AAA.

49. The Frontier as a physical barrier may have disappeared long ago (or not: 'Space: the final frontier'), but its character-building genius remained within the American people, or so Turner argued: 'To be sure... the story of the Frontier had reached its end, but the product of that experience remains. It remains in the predominant character, the traits of selfhood, with which the frontier experience had endowed Americans, that "dominant" individualism" which now must learn to cope with new demands', in Trachtenberg, op cit., p.15.
50. Cahill, lecture. FVOC/1086/AAA.
51. 'The Design Laboratory'. HC/1107/AAA.
52. ibid..
53. It may be useful here to mobilise Jean Baudrillard's concept of 'the gift' to explain the anxiety the Federal Art Project felt about 'commercial' use of its products, or their 'exchange value' potential. See For A Critique Of The Political Economy Of The Sign (Telos Press; St. Louis, 1981). It may be that Federal Art Project objects corresponded to what Baudrillard called 'the bygone object'. He continued 'Its "aesthetic" value is always a derived value: in it the stigmata of industrial production and primary functions are always eliminated. For all these reasons the taste for the bygone object is characterised by the desire to transcend the dimension of economic success, to consecrate a social success or a privileged position in a redundant, culturalised, symbolic sign', p.43.
54. 'National Art Weeks' began in America in 1940 and the sales took place in national department stores. See Sergue Guilbaut How New York Stole The Idea Of Modern Art, pp.55-58.
55. Ruth Reeves 'Untangling Our Art Traditions'. NDA/AAA.
56. Supplement No.1 to Federal Art Project Manual, Holger Cahill, January 1936. FAP/DC57/AAA.
57. Williams to Cahill, March 6th 1936. FAP/DC57/AAA.
58. The investigations of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in the late 1930s is discussed in Chapter 7.
59. Infinite because the origin of America in immigration from Europe could never be totally eradicated, only infinitely diluted. No matter how far away you can get from the original immigrant, temporally or spatially, history would always take you back there.
60. 'The Index Of American Design'. FAP/DC53/AAA. It continues 'these so rich and well defined, so continuous through decades and even centuries, as to raise many questions as to our briefer work in the arts...'
61. ibid..
62. ibid.. She continued 'It is true that in this country the invasion of foreign influence has been almost continuous. The country has been created by them, and the arts which have been done from abroad haven't typically been united with an already established native stock'. Again, the Indians are a lacunae without explanation.
63. The division between the 'internal dialogue' of the Federal Art Project and the 'external dialogue' through

- its publicity department, speakers, etc, is an important one. In the next chapter, we shall concentrate on some 'internal dialogue' quite different from the Project's public pronouncements.
64. A synecdoche for capitalism and industrial mass-production. An Index Of American Design policy statement, Technical Series, Art Circular 30, November 3rd 1938 said explicitly 'In no case will drawings furnish specifications for manufacturers'. FVOC/1086/AAA.
 65. A synecdoche for alien European culture.
 66. The rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy.
 67. 'For Art's Sake: Government To Salvage Our National Art Traditions Through The Index Of American Design', HC/1107/AAA.
 68. 'The Document As Art', by Hildegard Crosby, no date. FVOC/1091/AAA.
 69. 'The Index Of American Design'. HC/1107/AAA.
 70. From Index Of American Design Manual, WPA Technical Series Art Circular, October 1937. HC/1107/AAA.
 71. The piece by Hildegard Crosby begins: 'Is the document Art? Is the making of documents a creative activity? How can we define the margin of difference between the camera and brush in accurate representation? This margin involves an analysis of the artist's approach to the problem. The camera's approach is automatic; the artist's can not be...' FVOC/1091/AAA.
 72. Barthes says this is characteristic of mythical speech. See Mythologies, p.124. In relation to Index discourse, we could say: The intention (I am an object of American Culture/History) is stronger than the literal sense (I am a Vermont weathervane design, c.1845).
 73. This 'heterogeneous past' could be imagined to consist of logically unrelated elements. Their articulation is contingent. See Laclau's introduction to Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory.
 74. Guilbaut says that the term 'de-scriptive' is a 'way of demolishing history, of undoing it...', How New York Stole The Idea Of Modern Art, p.8.
 75. Represented as inevitable, yet, according to Laclau, articulation is always a contingent operation: 'The popular-democratic interpellation not only has no precise class content, but is the domain of ideological struggle par excellence. Every class struggles at the ideological level simultaneously as class and as the people, or rather, tries to give coherence to its ideological discourse by representing its class objectives as the consummation of popular objectives', Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, p.109.
 76. Index Of American Design Manual. FAP/DC55/AAA.
 77. 'The Document As Art', no date. FVOC/1091/AAA.
 78. *ibid.* She continues 'Thus his creative effort, not counting a developed facility and accurate physical perception which are his hammer and tongs, never takes a bow as such...'
 79. See Louis Althusser, *op cit.*, p.127-134.
 80. 'The Document As Art'.
 81. *ibid.* She continues 'Or in the case of objects which were originated by an artist, the document maker may assume the role of the original artist, by going through

- the mental process necessary to create the object, since a good art object personifies its creator...'
82. *ibid.*
 83. 'Untangling Our Art Traditions', September 10th 1937. NDA/AAA.
 84. *ibid.*
 85. 'American Design: From The Heritage Of Our Styles Designers Are Drawing Inspiration To Mould National Taste', House And Garden July 1938; vol.xxiv, no.1. The article continues 'the past should not mean an atmosphere of quaintness and nostalgia, but a source of vitality and renewal for our own day'.
 86. Holger Cahill, The Index Of American Design, p.xv.
 87. Constance Rourke 'Index Of American Design', American Magazine Of Art, April 1937; vol.xxx, no.4.
 88. In 'American Design' House And Garden July 1938; vol. xxiv, no.1. These makers were part of 'a whole race of men who were not selfconscious enough to call themselves artists but who, nevertheless, practiced art as part of their trade as workers of ships'.
 89. Constance Rourke, *op cit.*,
 90. 'American Design', House And Garden July 1938; vol. xxiv, no.1.
 91. *ibid.*
 92. The weathervane featured in several Index portfolios and is quite a useful example of how any popular tradition, as an element, was articulated in the 'national-cultural' Past. In an article entitled 'A Short History Of The Weathervane' by Louis G. Adorjan, we hear that one doesn't have to be a cloistered, cobwebbed antiquarian or a collector to evince an honest interest in the charm of the weathervane...Neither is it necessary to be a serious student of civilisation to be aware of the importance of the weathervane...in the history of mankind'. HC/1107/AAA.
 93. 'American Design', House And Garden July 1938; vol. xxiv, no.1.
 94. Turner expounded his Frontier Thesis in 1893 at a meeting of the American Historical Association during The World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.
 95. The Incorporation Of America, p.16. He continues 'The "connected and unified account" of the American past required by the times, coheres, then, in the figure of the typical, the composite American'.
 96. City-life was the dominant form of demographic distribution in the United States and had been since the mid-19th Century. Trachtenberg's first chapter is a demolition of the myths which grew up about the West and 'entrepreneurial capitalism' in America.
 97. The Index Of American Design, p.xviii.
 98. Poulantzas says: '...we must take account of the fact that territory is only one element of the modern nation and of the capitalist State's relationship to historical tradition and language...let us note that while this serial, discontinuous and segmented territory implies the existence of frontiers, it also poses the new problem of its own homogenisation and unification. Here too the State plays a role in forging national unity', State, Power, Socialism, p.105.

99. The Index Of American Design, p.xviii.
100. 'The Index Of American Design'. HC/1107/AAA. It continues 'Nothing is static about these, even though the group might for a time be exceedingly compact. Migration of these...diffusion...clear examples where art has been carried into more general communities and adapted...'
101. 'For Art's Sake...', Dorothy Grafly. FAP/DC56/AAA.
102. ~~ibid.~~
103. ~~ibid.~~ 'Culture, like a chain, is no stronger than its weakest link and the individual is that link. If he rallies to the cause America will yet salvage her design heritage and go her future way building not on European traditions which during the last quarter century have often clashed with American sensibilities and heritage, but on the sturdy rightness of such fundamental structures as old Pennsylvania barns, fast crumbling now, but proud to be the last stone and prouder still if, in their old age, they may assure a design future stemming from their roots in the American soil'.
104. Note again the proliferation of organic metaphors in Index discourse. This topic itself could form the basis for an entire thesis on 'America' as corpus.
105. Speech for Southern Women's National Democratic Organisation, December 6th 1936. DCM/1105/AAA.
106. Index Of American Design press release 9676, no date. FAP/DC56/AAA. It continues 'Even in the days of pioneer hardship, the women of America found time to make beautiful woven bedspreads...Many women who undoubtedly never dreamed that their handiwork would ever be treasured are represented in this exhibition. Among them is a servant girl from New Brunswick, New Jersey, who created a shoe-shaped pin cushion...'
107. Trachtenberg, The Incorporation Of America, p.17. He continues 'Land and minerals served economic and ideological purposes, the two merging into a single complex image of the West: a temporal site of the root from past to future, and the spatial site for revitalising national energies', p.17.
108. See note 47.
109. See Louis Althusser, op cit., pp. 170-177: 'It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since they are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we can not fail to recognise and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the "still, small voice of conscience"): "That's obvious! That's right! That's true!", p.172.
110. Not all, in fact - for example, the subject-position 'fascist' was not assimilable as a term of equivalential displacement in most (if not in any) New Deal State discourse.
111. The Christian Science Monitor, no date. FAP/DC56/AAA.
112. 'Index Of American Design', Constance Rourke, American Magazine Of Art April 1937; vol.xxx, no.4.
113. Cahill to Southern Women's National Democratic Organisation, December 6th 1936. DCM/1105/AAA. He continued: 'Art, I believe, is a very significant part of the life

of the community. It is a way of expanding our experience and making that experience more significantly a part of our lives. Art deepens our experience and at the same time makes that experience clearer to us. Art is also the best and the most complete medium between men and women, and makes it more possible for us to participate in the experience of others....'.

114. *ibid.*
115. 'The Index Of American Design Manual'. HC/1107/AAA.
116. As mentioned before, there was a tension between the need of the New Deal Administration to present itself as the codifier of the new national-popular and at the same time appear as the mere contemporary representative of an innate force for/of national cohesion, which emerged and submerged at various specific moments in the nation's history.
117. Williams to Cahill, March 6th 1936. FAP/DC56/AAA.
118. *ibid.*
119. *ibid.*
120. *ibid.*
121. Press Release, February 10th 1936. FAP/DC56/AAA.
122. Press Release, March 8th 1937. FAP/DC53/AAA.
123. In Memo, February 11th 1942. FVOC/1085/AAA.
124. *ibid.*
125. Press Release, March 9th 1937. FAP/DC53/AAA.
126. *ibid.*
127. Williams to Cahill, March 6th 1936. FAP/DC56/AAA.
128. Glassgold, in a letter to Ruth Reeves, August 4th 1936. FAP/DC53/AAA.
129. *ibid.*
130. *ibid.*
131. *ibid.*
132. Parker to Constance Rourke, July 30th 1937. FAP/DC57/AAA.
133. *ibid.*
134. Williams to Cahill, March 6th 1936. FAP/DC56/AAA. He continues 'the problem is of project workers not knowing about the Federal Art Project "as a whole"....' This 'does not mean that every employee should be turned into an active propagandist or that every employee should be required to subscribe to and approve every phase of the activity, it would be sufficient if they were familiar enough with the Program to respond intelligently to casual questions'.
135. *ibid.*
136. For a discussion of the division of knowledge between the State and society, see Poulantzas State, Power, Socialism, pp.54-62: 'Intellectual Labour And Manual Labour: Knowledge And Power'. He says 'In a certain sense, nothing exists for the capitalist State unless it is written down - whether as a mere written mark, a note, or a complete archive...the anonymous writing of the capitalist State plots a certain path, recording the bureaucratic sites and mechanisms and representing the hierarchically-centralised space of the State', p.59.
137. A theory of 'culture-management' both within the State apparatuses and within the 'private' institutions, such as the Museum Of Modern-Art, is essential to a fully-

- adequate understanding of the post-war development of American painting. Coupled with this is a need for a developed concept of 'cultural imperialism' in the age of monopoly capitalism. While masses of empirical data have been collected (see, for example, Armand Mattelart Multinational Corporations And The Control Of Culture: The Ideological Apparatuses Of Imperialism (Harvester; Sussex, 1979), there is a lack of a clear, systematic theory relating the 'culture industries', 'cultural producers' (e.g. artists), the State and politics.
138. Williams to Cahill, March 6th 1936. FAP/DC57/AAA.
139. *ibid.*
140. Poulantzas' definition of the function of the State changes considerably throughout his work, from Political Power And Social Classes (1968) when the State is described as a 'factor of cohesion' between levels of the social formation, to the definition in State, Power, Socialism (1979) as 'an unstable equilibrium of compromise' because of its constitution as 'the material condensation of...a relationship among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the State in a necessarily specific form' (pp.129ff). These definitions seem to emphasise different aspects of the State and are not necessarily contradictory. Though fragmented and composed of contradictory and conflictual interests in a specific configuration of forces, the Federal Art Project could still operate as a factor of cohesion. Poulantzas says: 'The State unifies the sectors of the capitalist formation in the further sense that it is the code of their irregular movements. The capitalist social formation or nation-State is also a process homogenised by the State...', p.112.
141. HC/1107/AAA.
142. *ibid.*
143. *ibid.*
144. *ibid.* Laclau says: '...by democracy we understand a set of symbols, values, etc - in short - interpellations - through which the 'people' grows aware of its identity through its confrontation with the power bloc. These interpellations are necessarily united to institutions in which democracy is materialised, but both aspects are indissoluble', footnote, p.107 Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory.
145. This theme is discussed in the following chapters. As has been indicated, the discussion of the international political role of Abstract Expressionism in the post-Second World War period should be placed in the context of an earlier development of State strategy for the mobilisation of national culture as an instrument of foreign policy. If we date the creation (if not creation, then a cultural and political climate for such a creation) of a strata of State Cultural Managers, across the 'public' and 'private' sectors to the mid and late 1930s in the United States, we may be able to also date the beginnings of the modern phase of State cultural imperialism, in the age of the dominance of monopoly

- capitalism. For a discussion of economic, political and cultural imperialism from a post-Leninist position, see Roger Dale 'Nation, State And International System: The World - System Perspective', in Stuart Hall (ed.) The Idea Of The Modern State.
146. HC/1107/AAA.
 147. G. Dimitrov, the Soviet Foreign Minister and architect of the Popular Front strategy adopted by the Comintern in 1935, had said '...the fascists are rummaging through the entire history of every nation so as to be able to pose as the heirs and continuators of all that was exalted and heroic in its past, while all that was degrading and offensive to the national sentiments of the people they make use of as weapons against the enemies of fascism...The American fascists appeal to the traditions of the American War Of Independence, the traditions of Washington and Lincoln...' Quoted in Laclau, Politics And Ideology In Marxist Theory, p.139. 'Democracy', then consisted of a specific discursive articulation, or more precisely 'in the form of elements of a discourse. There is no popular-democratic discourse as such. In this sense, democracy is not spontaneously communist for the simple reason that there is no democratic spontaneity', *ibid.*, p.170.
 148. For a brief discussion of this, see Daniel M. Smith and Joseph M. Siracusa The Testing Of America 1914-1945, pp.179-183.
 149. State, Power, Socialism, p.58 : '...the capitalist State installs a uniform national language and eliminates all other languages', p.58.
 150. *ibid.*.
 151. It is almost impossible to avoid personifying the State and its agencies and this can have retrograde effects: it implies a functionalism and a unity-of-action that is in fact non-existent. 'Federal Art Project discourse' always refers to specific and limited formulations by specific individuals and groups at specific times. It is their overall cohesion and homogeneity as constructed in meta-discourse which constitutes the 'it'.
 152. 'American Traditions For Young People', speech by Constance Rourke, June 15th 1937. HC/1107/AAA. She continues '...It seems to be romantic to set out to prove that the founding fathers and their successors in our history, up to 1850 or 1860, were utilitarians or materialists or obscurely or definitely Marxist or even wholly democratic or republican or motivated solely by something called "the American Dream"...'
 153. *ibid.*.

CHAPTER 6
State Cultural Strategies:
Some Operational Modulations

THE NEW YORK WORLD FAIR AND THE FEDERAL ART PROJECT

As the previous three chapters have shown, the Federal Art Project's strategic activities in the myriad fields of cultural production involved both local or self-generated initiatives - such as the Community Art Centre programme or the Index Of American Design - and a set of intersections with wider and more diverse sites in the extension of the Social, including State housing and Welfare programmes as well as the battery of penal, pedagogic and psycho/medical institutions ¹. Common to both loci of intervention was the Federal Art Project's attempt to act as an 'over-coder' ²: as a master-agency defining the field of discourse and activity proper to the hegemonized National-Subject ³. We can characterise this activity and the policy principles governing its efficacy as those concerned with a pragmatics of display - a strategic State semiotic ⁴ - representing to both the Citizen-Subject and to the Alien Outside ⁵ the nature and extent of the reterritorialised body of America ⁶.

The New York World Fair of 1939-1940, held at Flushing Meadow in the borough of Queens, was regarded by the Federal Art Project's national director, Holger Cahill, as a critical site for the State's display of its hegemonic discourse condensed within the Federal Art Project. Indeed, correspondence concerning the projected nature of the New York World Fair as a strategic representation of the Nation under the New Deal State can be traced back as far as December 1935, only months after the inception of the Federal Art Project within the Works Progress Administration.

In response to a letter asking Cahill for his interest in the World Fair, he had been adamant about the symbolic value which could be invested in the event as a representation of the nation-State. As no mere parochial and local reaction to the Chicago Fair of 1893 ⁷, Cahill thought the New York World Fair:

'should be of a national character rather than metropolitan or international' ⁸

Conscious, therefore, of the New York World Fair's national audience and, moreover, of its continental and global significance, the planning and realisation of the Fair was to both embody and to act as a sign for, the hegemonic discourse the New Deal State had articulated through the middle and late 1930s. In an unattributed document entitled 'The Fair Of The Future' there exists a detailed account of the aims and desired effects of the Fair as a representation of the direction of the Nation. ⁹ The structure of the Fair in this account corresponds closely to that description given by Francis V. O'Connor ¹⁰.

As was true with the Federal Art Project's discourse around the Index Of American Design, a central articulating moment in the discourse of the World Fair concerns the construction of a National History and Territory and the State's role as the guarantor of a temporal and spatial continuity. The World Fair is thus articulated as both a function and a reproducer of this continuity:

'The World Fair of 1939 commemorates the inauguration of George Washington as President of the United States. That event was much more than the inauguration of a president; it was the inauguration of an era of national growth and development unparalleled in the history of the world...'

11

Washington looked to the future, the document said, and in 'the same spirit' the New York World Fair should 'be a dedication of America to its future' ¹² . The construction of America as a unicity - that America is a discursive 'it' at all - was to be crucially centred around the State's rapidly developed function as rational managing arbiter: 'its' unifying and structuring activity was to galvanize all production towards an underlying 'social objective' ¹³ . America is reconstituted as Machine and the State as the Engineer-Regulator. The World Fair:

'must demonstrate that betterment of our future American life...may be achieved only through the coordinated efforts of Industry, Science and Art' ¹⁴

As with the organising of the Index Of American Design and the Federal Art Project's attempts to comprehensively socialise the production of art and to eliminate the chaotic determinations of the capitalist art market, the structure of the New York World Fair was to do away with the 'mediocrity by stunts and side shows' ¹⁵ which had typified previous Fairs' 'competitive showmanship' ¹⁶ . Towards this end, the Fair's organising body, the Committee On Social Planning, proposed to direct the Fair as a whole and to project its contents as a 'unicity' ¹⁷ . This is homologous to the New Deal discourse which articulates the State 'itself' as organiser and arbiter. The Fair, therefore, like the National-State under Roosevelt, will unify previously disparate and even antagonistic elements and activities: Machinery, Science, Technology, Agriculture and Art will become integral moments in the

'American way of living'. Private Enterprise exhibitors at the Fair are to be encouraged to:

'demonstrate the social values both extant and potential, of their particular type of industry, with special emphasis on future developments' 19

The integral planning of Labour and Leisure and even the future dissolution of them as an antagonism - a discourse prominent throughout Federal Art Project activities - is present here in the Fair's ambitions to co-ordinate and harmonise all the activities of 'modern American living' ²⁰. The State functions as the master regulator and as the ameliorator of antagonisms. A striking characteristic of modern Government is thus:

'the extensive range of its activities...art, education, etc to its citizens. The theme will be...therefore, what the Government does for the welfare of the individual citizen' 21

This 'individuated' citizen is thus the subject and object of the New York World Fair's master-discourse; it propels the Citizen-Subject into a punctual relation with the State. This State is, in turn, responsible for the pace and direction of the Nation's 'advancing social order' ²². The State must constitute 'itself' as the unified representation of a unified field of subjects ²³.

VISUALISING SOCIAL ORDER

Within the structure of the New York World Fair as a whole, as also within the New Deal State as a

structure of agencies and activities, the location of art was important. Important both as a means through which a visualisation of the Nation-State could be constructed, and as constituting a cluster of discourses concerned with the abolition of antagonisms in American society and history ²⁴ . In the representation of America's 'usable future' ²⁵ , carefully planned art and architecture functioned as synecdoches for a model of the Social as Organism, 'as a functional eco-system' ²⁶ . With the Fair's stated themes of 'Building The World Of Tomorrow' and 'The Interdependence Of Man', it is possible to identify direct homologies between the diverse yet unified discourses of the Federal Art Project and those of the New York World Fair ²⁷ . As has been seen, the model of a rationally planned and functionally harmonious social system underpinned much of the Federal Art Project's stated policy objectives. Francis O'Connor presents an early framing of this developing meta-narrative ²⁸ . In Norman Bel Geddes' book Horizon (1932), it is stated:

'We are entering an era which, notably, shall be characterised by design in four specific phases: design in social structure to ensure the organisation of people, work, wealth, leisure; design in machines that shall improve working conditions by eliminating drudgery; design in all objects of daily use that shall make them economical; design in the arts: painting, sculpture, music, literature and architecture that shall inspire the new era'

29

The importance of the chief theoretician of the Fair, Walter Dorwin Teague, and his book Design This Day (1940)

lay in his representation of American society - signified through the Fair - as a geometric structure of structures. This 'stream-lining with speed' ³⁰ of a hitherto dysfunctional ensemble of agents and activities - the representation of the Nation before the New Deal - also suggested, O'Connor says, 'the maintenance of static perfection' ³¹ . This may be seen as an image homologous to the notion of a fully-sutured field of discourse: of the fixing for ever of unstable elements into a unified and over-determined hegemonic articulation ³² .

Within the tripartite division of visual representations at the Fair - architecture, monumental painting and sculpture, and museum art - the role of the State and corporate art institutions and personnel, was pivotal ³³ . Among those directly involved with the World Fair Corporation were: A. Conger Goodyear, the President of the Museum Of Modern Art in New York; Juliana Force from the Whitney Museum Of American Art; Herbert Winlock, from the Metropolitan Museum Of Art; Lawrence P. Roberts from the Brooklyn Museum and Holger Cahill, the director of the Federal Art Project ³⁴ .

FEDERAL ART AT THE FAIR

From 1939 onwards attempts were made, by both sectors of the State and private corporations hostile to the Federal Art Project, to reinstate the supremacy of private patronage of art and to argue for a concomitant return to a validation of European-derived modernist theories and practices ³⁵ . At the New York World Fair,

the 'Masterpieces Of Art' exhibition sponsored by private subscription and selected by William R. Valentiner, the director of the Detroit Institute Of Arts, ran parallel with the exhibition organised by Cahill called 'American Art Today' ³⁶. This show, in the Contemporary Arts Building, consisted of twenty three rooms, covering 40,000 square feet and included eight hundred works produced on various Government art projects ³⁷. This presence of the Federal Art Project at the New York World Fair was to serve the purpose of displaying the activities and productivity of the arts projects in an increasingly oppositional context - the determinants of which shall be discussed later - and through that, construct a representation of the New Deal as a vision of the Past/Present/Future for the national and international audience. Again, the recognised need for both these functions can be traced back through the correspondence of the Federal Art Project workers and supporters to at least 1936 ³⁸. By 1939, however, with the progressive dissolution of the so-called 'Roosevelt Coalition' which had produced election victories for the Democrats in 1932 and 1936, oppositional voices stressing the limited and limiting value of Federal Art Project activities were vocal at high levels in the production of Project policy statements ³⁹. The 'American Art Today' building would, according to the New York City Federal Art Project director Audrey McMahon, 'demonstrate the role of the Government as a sponsor of the arts not only through exhibitions of works of art created under Government

auspices' ⁴⁰ . It would also act as a benevolent facilitator, encouraging a 'wider understanding and appreciation of modern art as it exists beyond Government sponsorship' ⁴¹ . Though press responses to the Federal Art Project exhibition were in many cases still highly favourable, a growing opposition to the principle of the State's involvement with cultural production through the direct employment of artists existed ⁴² . Congressional moves to change the nature and the extent of the funding of the Project were to be enacted in late 1939 ⁴³ . Compounding these misfortunes of the Federal Art Project and its public image as a legitimate part of the New Deal, was the news in December 1939 that the San Francisco Golden Gate Fine Arts Exhibition had been visited by more than double the combined attendance figure for both the New York World Fair shows, with the 'American Art Today' show well down on the 'Masterpieces Of Art' exhibition ⁴⁴ . According to Art Digest, whose editorial over these years turned slowly but surely away from support for the principles of the Federal Art Project's existence, 'aesthetic worth' had returned as the dominant consideration in judging the quality of works of art ⁴⁵ . With Art Digest's return to a more orthodox Modernist lexicon of values for the production of culture in America, and its more hostile stance towards 'the social painters', it is possible to see how the role of the Federal Art Project in providing about a hundred muralists to paint various walls, facades and promenades at the New York World Fair, became seen as crassly functionalist ⁴⁶ . Indeed, according to one writer, the general attitude was such that in this

hostile climate, almost all these murals were demolished at the Fair's close in 1941 ⁴⁷ .

The Federal Art Project's own planning for their representation at the Fair can be traced back to 1937 when Cahill had suggested that a Community Art Centre be built at the Fair, to contain all the cultural activities of the Works Progress Administration ⁴⁸ . Eventually, however, the Works Progress Administration's building, which was located in what was known as the 'Community Interests Sector', on the 'Avenue Of Patriots' contained not only the arts projects but the entire publicworks schemes exhibits ⁴⁹ . This building was known either as the Works Progress Administration Community Building or as the 'Work - The American Way Building'.

The Federal Art Project murals designed and executed for this building were produced under the direction of the painter Burgoyne Diller, the head of the mural division of the Federal Art Project in New York. According to Helen A. Harrison ⁵⁰ , they had:

'replaced the classically-oriented academic and anecdotal pseudo-Mexican approaches to mural art, and the new style relied on the abstraction of contemporary themes and subjects' 51

As was seen with the representations of themes in federal murals in institutions, the World Fair murals largely consisted of a set of representations of generalised or 'ideal' subject-positions constructing the Citizen-Worker in American society ⁵² . These murals were painted by the artists Philip Guston, Seymour Fogel, Ryah Ludins,

Eric Mose, Louis Ross, Anton Refregier, Ruth Reeves, Abraham Lishinsky, Irving Block, Alex Alland, Louis Shanker, Ilya Bolotowsky, Balcombe Greene and Byron Browne⁵³. The amount of activity by the Federal Art Project and its artists at the New York World Fair might be taken as an indication of the public acceptance and stability of support for the Project and the Works Progress Administration. In opposition to this reading, it may be more appropriate to see this presence in 1939 and 1940 as one of the Federal Art Project's last major attempts to galvanize public and Congressional support for its activities as part of the Works Progress Administration and its particular conception of 'public service' and 'community activity'.

Yet despite the attacks on the Federal Art Project from Congress and corporate interests in the late 1930s, it is possible to discern not the end of the State's intervention into cultural production, but rather a modulation of the mode and purpose of State intervention. These variations in operational procedure were to result in the construction of a wider and more extensive system of networks linking economic production, political discourses and cultural practices⁵⁴.

An understanding of this modulation requires a redefinition of the State agencies and power networks actively involved in deploying and intersecting the cultural resources generated or mobilised by the Federal Art Project. By 1939 and early 1940, the relative autonomy of the Works Progress Administration as a political institution within the New Deal State had been

removed, and with United States rearmement for the coming war, the private corporations had returned to an outright superiority in the American military-industrial complex ⁵⁵. What was to follow was the public restitution of the dominant position of the corporations and the justifications this required after seven or eight years of Roosevelt's 'New' and 'Fair' dealing. Within this redefined and re-territorialised field for the strategic operation of State-directed and deployed cultural discourses, the space opened up by the Federal Art Project remained, but was rearticulated and redirected. One important aspect of this modulation concerned the visibility of its operative level within the profile of the machinery of the State. ⁵⁶. What can be charted is a partial transition from a State 'display-function' to a State 'information/surveillance function'. This novel functional mode involved, in turn, a transition from what could be called the 'State-Visible' to the 'State-Covert' domain of activity.

STATE CULTURAL SURVEILLANCE

We shall now proceed to discuss three paradigms exhibiting aspects of this significant modulation in the theoretical or practical function of the cultural productive-capacities engendered by the Federal Art Project ⁵⁷. At this stage a caveat is required to explain that, within these modulated or 'resected' operations, their very identity as moments of a specific Federal Art Project discourse is either threatened or

lost entirely ⁵⁸ . Following the protocols of the previous analyses of Federal Art Project discourse as a relatively stable structure of articulations fixing diverse elements as moments in a New Deal State discourse ⁵⁹ , it will be argued that by late 1939, with the fundamental changes in the organisation and power networks of the Federal Art Project, the sub-activities and sub-discourses of particular programmes were rearticulated as different moments in other non-Federal Art Project State discourses ⁶⁰ .

Despite the growing hostility to what has been characterised the 'display-function' of the Federal Art Project, it may be that the possibility of these modulations within the State's power networks was a product of the recognition of the efficiency with which the Federal Art Project had been able to construct discourses on service-provision and planning. The modulation which occurred functioned on the general principles of covert information-gathering and processing, surveillance and regulation. The complexity of this modulation and its operational transformations should be related to a wider understanding of the shifts in the State apparatuses vis a vis the social-managerial agencies of the New Deal - the Works Progress Administration, the National Recovery Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, etc - and in response to the requirements of rearmament and the maintenance of both internal/external State security.

While it may have been true that many had been unwilling to admit that: —

'artists are as essential to our life as a
great nation as are doctors, lawyers,
engineers, merchants and manufacturers' 61

this discourse on the 'needs of the Nation' in times of
approaching war was to require a particular articulation
of all social labour towards the State's defensive and
offensive functions. The peculiar situation arose therefore
that the call for artists to be returned to their
'rightful' position in a free market with its chaotic-
though-liberating determinations of patronage and power,
occurred just at the point when the 'requirements' of
War Production and of a generalised economic and social
planning was turning all labour and all Citizens over
to a more interventionist and organising State.

As will be seen, however, with the developing
direct military use of State-deployed visual represent-
ations, the utility of some artists is familiarly
constructed as equivalent to 'forwarding the mails,
guarding our coastlines, peaceably patrolling our friendly
borders [which have] long been Federal services' 62 .
This, and other developing functions facilitated by the
five years of the Federal Art Project provided unique and
significant benefits to the State as the New Deal and
Fair Deal were left behind and the 'Great Society' of
the post-war era became the master-discourse of the
State 63 .

The first paradigm consists of a theoretically-projected
modulation in the function of Federal Art Project
activities and derives from a lecture given by Holger
Cahill himself in September 1937 64 . This was a full